

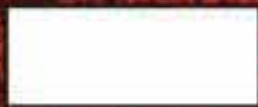
# RAZZORCAKE

#56



**BILLY BRAGG**  
**DUDE JAMS**  
**THEE UNDERTAKERS**  
(PART 1)

**\$4.00**



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*Razorcake* is a bonafide non-profit music magazine dedicated to supporting independent music culture. All donations, subscriptions, and orders directly to us—regardless of amount—have been essential to our continued survival.

*Razorcake's* reason for existing isn't to "maximize profit." It's sustainable yield. Our growth over the past nine years has been slow, calculated, and modest. One aspect that's almost heresy in the "magazine business" is donating copies of brand-new issues to folks who share the basic ideas of community over corporations, art over commerce, hand made over mass-produced. For years now, we've donated *Razorcakes* to many branches of the Los Angeles Public Library, zine libraries across the country, community and teen centers. That makes me proud. I'd rather be in any library than in a Hot Topic (which recommended, years ago, putting "a band that's known" on the cover. "A popular band. Like Under Oath.") Hot Topics make me itchy and uncomfortable even before they suggested a Christian screamo Warped Tour band to us.

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If you would like to give *Razorcake* some longer-term, hands-on assistance, we're looking for volunteers in the following areas: locally based non-profit grant writer and non-profit fundraiser, FileMaker Pro wizard, PC network specialist, and website coder (PHP-Nuke and Zen Cart). If you live in the L.A. area, we could always use a helping hand.

Contact us via [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org) if you'd like to help out.

Thank you.

—Todd Taylor

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# RAZZORCAKE .ORG

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BIRD STRIKE

## Slow Fiction

We were standing on a graffitied bench at the top of a hill. Wind was blowing snow off a peak in the distance. By rotating, we could see the San Gabriel and San Fernando valleys and the ocean. I've always contended that Los Angeles is beautiful if only you can see it through the smog. Windy days after rain make for rare clear days; it's like the *They Live* version of L.A., except you can see what can make it such a great place instead of having it feel like every billboard says "Consume. Die." I like that bench. It's a thinkin' bench. Below us, middle school kids lumbered around a track for physical education.

A little over nine years ago, my best friend Sean Carswell and I started *Razorcake*. Sean's now up in Ventura, sixty miles north. We don't see each other as much as we'd both like. He's teaching college up there, simultaneously working on his Ph.D. and running Gorsky Press. Between us, there's not a lot of free time to hang out, which sucks. I don't want to fuck Sean over and take any credit for what he talked about, but what he said hit me profoundly.

It's generally accepted that there are a couple of ways to affect social change—equal rights for all races, both genders, all beliefs. The first is politically: marches, protests, direct action, non-fiction political writing, legislation, personal life decisions. If there's a problem, confront it in the streets, in the courts, in jails, in hospitals, in newspapers, in your home. Fight that problem.

The second force for social change is education. The highest measure of a person's success going through any education—formal or informal—is developing critical thinking skills. Without the ability to look at all the parts, question them, and then come to your own conclusions, say hello to being constantly manipulated by forces much stronger and greater than you are. And guess what? It's in those

forces of best interest that the general populace can't see what's going on and how they operate. This is why advertising and propaganda work so effectively in a free nation. If a person doesn't understand the mechanisms behind how they're being molded, how can they effectively change themselves or the world around them? They can't.

Sean proposed a third, much-less-recognized form of social change: social change through fiction—stories and songs. "Yeah, Todd, no shit. A dude working on a dissertation in literature's gotta make a job for himself and not feel like a sellout. Same thing with a dude who puts out a punk zine. Books about whales and shit? Fuck you." But I think that Sean's on to something. It's all about maximizing long-term effect. In 1851, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* was published and Harriet Beecher Stowe started releasing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a serial called *Life among the Lowly*, decrying slavery. Both books are many things, but racially, they remain 159 years ahead of their time and relevant through today. A line as simple as Melville's—when the lead character Ishmael regards the islander Queequeg, that—"a man can be honest in any type of skin," resonates well over a century and a half later. And all Melville and Stowe were armed with were pens, some paper, and a clear vision of humanity.

Later that night, with the Hidden Spots' *Hundred Million Voices* spinning on the record player, I realized Sean was absolutely right. These fictions we make, the prayer-like repetition of listening to great, largely unheard music... it's "More beautiful than an unmanned pulpit, like a god awful flag being taken down, and I hear the sound of a hundred million voices making individual choices."

—Todd Taylor

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#### ISSUE #57

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010

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"Whether a belief is considered to be a delusion or not depends partly upon the intensity with which it is defended, and partly upon the numbers of people subscribing to it."

—Anthony Storr, *Feet of Clay*

This issue is dedicated to Jesse Renee Clarke. Congratulations Skinny Dan and KT!

### Margin Mouth HQ.

The skatepark show had been cancelled due to rain.

Dan Padilla rolled in with Dude Jams and Hairdos On Fire.

Bird Strike played first.

All the bands rocked it.

It was classy. There was a chandelier, a plastic baby Jesus, and week-to-make homebrew.

"Hey Todd, I'd really like to do a layout some day."

"Sure thing, Gene."

Gene Doney, right, drummer of Dan Padilla, and this issue's cover artist.

Yes, his pants are loosened. He needed room to boogie.



THANK YOU: You say "cancer," the Cheap Girls say "vitamins," we say "cigarettes" thanks to Gene Doney for his cover artwork; America, fuck yeah! thanks to Dana Curran for the cover shots; Gooooooooo!!!! thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; Dahlia, dandelions, or mums? "They're blue, Jim" thanks to Jackie Rusted for her illo. in Jim's column; (in wizard voice) "Thank you Nation of Amanda" for the water coloring of Mitch's column; bask in the glow of the post-racist, post-follicular world of peace, love, and scorching Hardee's oil thanks Ryan Gelatin for his illo. in Norb's column; I bet dirty Chicken conies smell particularly fowl thanks to Bill Pintel for his illo. in the Rhythm Chicken's column; Squint, and it's three moods of Patrick Swayze thanks to Craig Horky for his illo. in Dale's column; Gold-damn-it, what's this about? thanks to Danny Martin for his Olympic illo. in Nardvuar's column; Communists in cemeteries thanks to Jimmy Alvarado and Angie Garcia for Thee Undertakers interview and the hand lettering; When Adam's head's down and he's "in the zone" he sorta looks like a Shmoo made out of hair and that's pretty awesome thanks to Replay Dave, Dana Curran, Amber Prainito, and Amy Adoyzie for the Cheap Girls interview, photos, and layout; Dirty, filthy, fear-mongering... wait a sec... wrong channel... Clean, well-spoken, compassion-driven, coffee-fueled thanks to Lauren Measure, Replay Dave, Lily Richeson, and Henry Taksier for the interview, photos, and layout for Billy Bragg; "So Brandon, you're getting fat." "Was that on your list of things to ask me?" "No, I just thought about it" thanks to Chris Mason, Keith Rosson, and Danny Bengston for the Dude Jams interview, layout, and photos; Some of those people who wrote really nice letters are gonna be buuummmmed when this comes out thanks to the following folks for their record, zine, book, and DVD reviews: Adrian Salas, Craven Rock, Jeff Proctor, Jessica T., Jennifer Federico, Kurt Morris, CT Terry, Ian Wise, MP Johnson, Jimmy Alvarado, Keith Rosson, Art Ettinger, Maddy Tight Pants, Juan Espinosa, Josh Benke, Ryan Horky, The Lord Kveldulfr, Rene Navarro, Matt Average, Donutshoprock, Vincent Battilana, Billups Allen, Jennifer Whiteford, Joe Evans III, Ty Stranglehold, Sean Koepenick, NL Dewart, Mike Frame, Jake Shut, Bryan Static, Will Kwiatkowski, Lauren Trout, Speedway Randy, Ryan Leach, Steve Hart, Andy Conway, Nick Toerner, and Garrett Barnwell; (in wizard voice again) thanks to Chris Baxter for his Photoshop magic; Emoticons are so not grammatically acceptable thanks to Kari Hamanaka, Ever Velasquez, Rene Navarro, Vince Battilana, Samantha Beerhouse, and Josh Robles for they're proofing readz and their tiger-like editing prowess; He has these tiny tweezers where razorcake. org's code is incubated and stuff thanks to Phill Legault; Razorcake's digital friends are put in the internet's sky corral thanks to Jeff Proctor and Samantha Beerhouse; Razorcake is locally "paper routed" thanks to Joe Dana, Ever Velasquez, and Juan Espinosa; I've already high fived them in real life, so here's the print version thanks to Adrian Salas, Ever Velasquez, Josh Robles, Juan Espinosa, Donpickedupsomewood, Rene Navarro, and Samantha Beerhouse for their helping out at HQ in flesh and blood and not binary code; Mary-Clare Stevens is super-duper, too.

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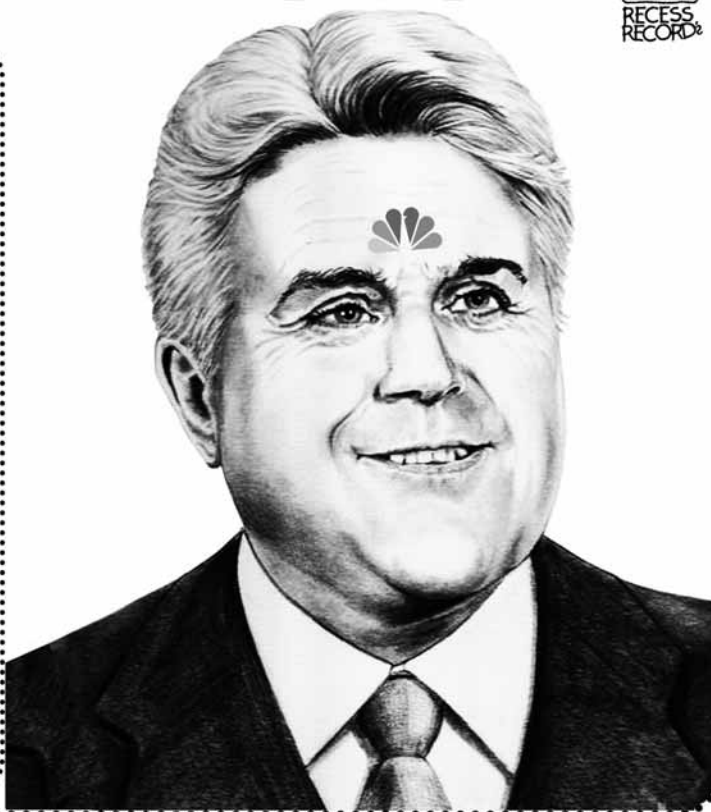
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Issue #56 June / July 2010

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Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of Razorcake/Gorsky Press, Inc.

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## A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

**“We all got drunk, drunk, drunk.”**

# NO SLEEP TILL WORLD CUP

**1994**

About an hour outside of DC, we stopped at a gas station and bought a twelve-pack to celebrate the fact that we were gonna make it to the game. It had been a tall order. A buddy of mine had called me a week earlier to tell me that he had a pair of tickets for two consecutive World Cup games in DC, but he couldn't make it to the games. Did I want them? I did a quick assessment. DC was about six hundred miles away. I had to work on the day before the first game, the day of the first game, and the day after the second one. The Friday night shift I couldn't skip. The Saturday night shift would be easy to cover, but no one was likely to work a Monday lunch for me. I was more or less broke. Of course I wanted the tickets.

The week that followed was an incredible juggling act that entailed calling in every favor owed to me and asking for every favor I could get to cover my shifts. My partner in crime, Laura Molnar, did the same. We worked Friday night until about one o'clock, armed ourselves with the night's tips and illicit substances that could only be considered necessities, and hopped into my truck for the long haul. By the time we hit I-95 south of Richmond, the industrial strength goods were gone and we were relegated to sodas and over-the-counter asthma pills to help us stay awake. By the time our tailgating began in the parking lot of RFK stadium in DC, a third of the half-rack was drained, I hadn't slept in more than thirty hours, and I was out of my mind excited. The World fucking Cup!

**1990**

How can I help you, the skeptical reader of a punk rock magazine, understand the transcendent glory that is the World Cup? Should I start with the underdog story? World Cup 1990. A ragtag team of Cameroonians, led by the foot of the aging international star Roger Milla, took on and took down the reigning champions and top ranked Argentina in the first game of the Cup. After their 1-0 defeat of Argentina, they went an unlikely 2 and 0 in group play when Milla scored two goals against Romania. They had a third game in group play, this one against the Soviet Union. The game was insignificant. Cameroon had already advanced to the Round of 16. The Cinderella team barely showed up to play

that third game. The Soviet Union beat them 4-0. A reporter asked center midfield François Omam-Biyik what happened in that game. Omam-Biyik said, “We were drunk, drunk, drunk.”

Would you love that Cameroonian side even more if I told you that their star forward, Roger Milla, was missing one of his front teeth? Would you invest yourself in them emotionally if I told you that the beleaguered Africans may have gone to the finals if not for the World Cup's greatest travesty, during which a criminal referee ejected two Cameroonian players (including the legendary Omam-Biyik) and awarded England two penalty kicks to ensure that the European side was able to beat the mighty Cameroon 3-2?

**1994**

Game 1: Norway versus Mexico. A third of the crowd were Vikings dressed in the blues and reds of Norway singing songs of pillaging the sixth century coast of Ireland, or whatever “Nooor-geee, Nooor-geee” means. A third of the crowd was in the greens and reds of Mexico, trusting in the insurmountable border presented by Jorge Campos's goalkeeping. And, in the immediate vicinity of the bleary-eyed Molnar and me: the rest of the people from the Atlanta law office who had purchased these tickets. My buddy, who was an intern at that office, may have thought twice about giving me these tickets if he'd had any idea how I would've showed up, ready to party among his co-workers. And maybe I was too loud, too drunk, too smelly, and too excited. Maybe I did sing all of the Norwegian and Mexican national team songs in English and root for both teams when they were in front of the goal. Still, I had the good sense to buy a round for the half-dozen soccer fans around me. By the end of the game, we were all fucking singing. Norway won 1-0.

**2002**

I rearranged my entire life to watch the 2002 World Cup, which was played in Japan and South Korea. Since daytime over there is nighttime here, games were aired in California between 2:00 and 8:00 in the morning. For five weeks, I slept days, worked nights on Razorcake, and watched every single one of those witching-hour games. When Mexico advanced to the Round of 16 to take on their

rivals, the U.S., I held my breath. I lived in a mostly Mexican-American community in L.A. The day of the game, the neighborhood was bathed in greens and reds. The sound waves of local parties and norteño music were so strong you could've surfed them. Parties raged until the eighth minute of the game, when U.S. forward Brian McBride stabbed the ball into the back of the Mexican net. Highland Park erupted in an agonized groan. When U.S. midfielder Landon Donovan sunk the insurance goal, the neighborhood observed forty-eight hours of mournful silence. The only grins to be found were on the faces of me, Todd, and the Guatemalan guy who lived in the back apartment.

**1994**

Game 2: Netherlands versus Saudi Arabia. This time, I was actually rooting for a team. I'd aligned myself with the Dutch side since watching them dominate the 1988 European Cup. This time, they were led by one of the most exciting—and dirtiest—midfielders to play the game: Edgar Davids. And here he was, right in front of me. I was actually getting the opportunity to watch him play live. In person. Incredible.

I did have a soft spot for the Saudi Arabians, though, because prior to the Cup, McDonalds and Coke, as a way of trying to profit off the games, put out a series of cups and food wrappers with national flags on them. The Saudi Arabian flag was included, and the Saudis got pissed off because their flag, which features the Islamic declaration of faith, was featured on all kinds of disposable representations of American excess. Keep in mind, this was before there was a Starbucks in Mecca (which, incidentally, I'm not kidding about; there really is a Starbucks at Mecca, just in case you need a shitty, burnt coffee in the middle of your religious pilgrimage). As a punk rocker who'd seen way too many bands co-opted by the disposable culture of corporate America, I empathized with the Saudis. Still, I celebrated both goals that the Dutch buried on the way to their 2-1 victory. I celebrated even louder because the half-dozen people who I'd bought a round for the day before bought me and Molnar a round at this game. We all got drunk, drunk, drunk.

**2010**

By the time you read this, the 2010 World Cup should be underway in South Africa. It's

a little too far to drive to, and I don't think Molnar is up for making the trip with me this time. Even so, you can rest assured that I'll schedule everything for five weeks around watching these games. I hope you'll catch a game or two, also. If you do, I'll give you a few pointers. First, watch the U.S. national team. They should be exciting, especially if Clint Dempsey and Oguchi Onyewu are healthy and ready to go. I even hope that you'll root for the Americans all the way up to the quarter-finals, at which point I hope all the underdogs lose so that I can see the really great teams play each other. Second, watch the Africans, particularly the Ivorians. They have the best forward in the world right now, Didier Drogba. They probably won't make it out of group play, but they will be playing some of the most wide-open soccer you'll ever see. If you want to see a lot of goals, that's where you're likely to see them. Third, watch the Spaniards. They're playing soccer at the highest level I can imagine. I've seen a few teams play this well over the years, but I've never seen teams play better. Fourth, if Tommy Smyth is one of the commentators, change the channel. He must be the most hated announcer in all of sports, and he's not hated because he's such a wild man and rebel that he can't be contained. He's hated because he seems to despise soccer as much as ESPN does, so ESPN unleashes him on fans as a way of showing their spite for having to postpone their bullshit, thinly-veiled homoerotic programming for an hour and a half while the world's greatest game is being played. If they thrust Tommy Smyth on you, flip over to the Spanish-language channels. You don't have to speak the language to know they're having fun. You'll have fun, too.

1994

Of course, Molnar and I both had to work the morning after the second game, and of course the restaurant where we worked was six hundred miles away. Still, we decided to go out partying that night in DC, leave around 11:00, drive through the night, and still be at work in time for our ten o'clock starting time. Our math was flawless. Plus, it just happened to be my DC friend Jane's birthday. We celebrated her birthday and the Cup with her until a little after midnight, then hit the road. At 2 A.M., I realized that I was passing the exit that I'd entered the DC bypass on an hour earlier, which meant that I'd somehow missed I-95 and circled around the city. At 4 A.M., Molnar was zonked and no over-the-counter asthma medicine was going to keep me awake through another four hundred miles and a six-hour lunch shift. I got a cheap motel room and set the alarm for 8 A.M. Molnar would have to call in sick for both of us then. I would've called, but we were a lot less likely to get fired if Molnar did.

Besides, I knew all along that I'd gladly lose my job for two World Cup games.

—Sean Carswell



BRAD BESHAW

**BY THE END OF THE GAME,  
WE WERE ALL  
FUCKING SINGING.**



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

**“The nurse’s aide came back with good news, and by good news I mean Dilaudid.”**

# Shot Through the Heart

I didn’t mean to get high.

It started with a twinge in my shoulder. I’ve had bouts of lower back pain brought on by too much exercise after not enough of it. The discomfort was similar, only this time it was in my shoulder and not my back. By the time I got home from work, the twinge had turned into a throb, like the muscles were flexing in the wrong direction. I took some aspirin, camped out on the couch—camping out on the couch being my go-to move when things go bad—and waited for it to go away. But the pain didn’t go away. It got worse.

It was the strangest thing. I could move my arm some ways and not feel a thing, but if I twisted this way or that, it sent shooting pains up and down my arm. The weird thing was I hadn’t injured my shoulder, or exerted myself during exercise, or even slept on it funny. I thought of one of my late grandfather’s favorite jokes:

A guy goes to the doctor. “Doc, it hurts when I do this.” The doctor looks him over. “Then don’t do that!”

So I didn’t do that, at least for a little while, but when I tried to get up from the couch, the pain was crippling. I called my wife and told her my symptoms.

“Gee,” she said, “I hope you’re not having a heart attack.

Oh shit. I thought of all the articles I’d read about guys having heart attacks and not realizing it, and causing all kinds of damage in the process. I’d always wondered *How do you have a heart attack and not know it?* Was this what was happening to me? I didn’t know much about cardiac arrest, but I did know that shooting pain in the left arm was one of the symptoms. But a heart attack? Really?

My family had a history of bad tickers. Both of my maternal grandparents died of strokes before my mother turned sixteen. I thought about the grandparents I never knew. I thought about my new marriage and young daughter and the boatload of money I spent on health insurance. That settled it. When my wife got home from class, I asked her to take me to the emergency room.

\*\*\*

As soon as I stepped inside the hospital, the doubts came creeping back. *There’s nothing wrong with me... I shouldn’t be here... The people in the waiting room are much worse off...*

Except there was something wrong with me. By this time, I could barely move my

arm. I held it pressed to my chest like it was broken. When the nurse who checked me in asked me to rank my pain from one to ten, I said five. Then he offered me some Vicodin. I said, “No thanks,” and told him I’d wait until I saw the doctor. My wife admonished me for downplaying my pain.

I had my reasons. I hadn’t taken a single drug or drop of liquor in exactly nine months. In the time it takes to make a baby, the strongest thing that had passed my lips was a double espresso. I’d gone to countless meetings and listened to hundreds of people give advice on how to stay clean and sober, and there I was in the hospital where they were passing out pills like potato chips. It was a regular party in the ER, and my wife was urging me to jump right in. I felt deeply conflicted about all this and I didn’t know what to do.

Cardiac cases get top priority at the ER, so before I could re-think my position on the Vicodin, a German nurse whisked me away to a bed. After my wife helped me put on the gown, the German nurse came back with a sling for my arm. A Filipina nurse’s aide prepped me for the EKG and hooked me up to the machines. A male Filipino doctor fired questions at me about my symptoms. He was blunt in his assessment:

“I don’t think you’re having a heart attack, but I’m not taking any chances. So I’m going to give you some morphine, okay?”

I nodded, but on the inside, I felt like a guttersnipe in a Charles Dickens novel, begging thanks and weeping gratitude. *Thank you, good sir. God bless you!*

A Filipino nurse took my blood, plugged me into the IV, monitored by vitals on the flight deck. Every few minutes he’d come by to see how I was doing. Frankly, I was annoyed. I’d never had morphine before, and I wanted to enjoy the ride, not answer a million freaking questions. It’s not like I’d dropped acid and the LSD was going to come on like gangbusters.

And then the morphine came on like gangbusters.

There was nothing gradual about it. I’d used the word “rush” to describe altered states countless times, but none of those experiences came close to this. It felt like a wave passing through me, a slow-motion current that flowed through my body and went streaming upward. When it reached my head, I felt flush—like a vessel that had been filled to the brim—only the substance

was energy and I was overflowing with it. I expelled the excess through my mouth, nose, and eyeballs, and when that didn’t happen fast enough, it took the top of my head clean off.

“Wow.”

“You look better,” my wife said. “How do you feel?”

“High.”

Why lie? My head was feeling amazingly kite-like. I was way, way up there without a hint of turbulence. Yet I could still think rationally and speak lucidly.

“How does your arm feel?”

Strangely, my arm felt the same. While the rest of my body felt completely relaxed, the pain in my arm continued unabated. If anything, I felt more uncomfortable than before. I passed this information on to the Filipino nurse when he came back for an update. “Hmmm,” he said, “I’ll get you something stronger.”

I mentally retracted my previous annoyance with this very wise and generous man.

A Caucasian male x-ray tech took my x-rays. My brother is an x-ray tech, and I tried to make small talk, but carrying on a conversation was difficult. The words rushed through my head but getting my mouth to cooperate was a different story. A Latino hospital administrator took my money, and a Latina education officer asked me about my drug use, which was nonexistent. I’d been waiting for someone to ask me this all night, and was eager to out myself.

“I’ve been clean and sober nine months,” which is a weird thing to brag about while hopped up on morphine.

“Congratulations,” she said.

The nurse’s aide came back with good news, and by good news I mean Dilaudid.

\*\*\*

If the morphine was a wave, the Dilaudid crept in like fog. Sneaky and cat feety. I didn’t feel it working its way through my body the way I’d felt the morphine. I didn’t feel anything at all. The pain didn’t go away. It was just gone.

A television mounted above my bed leaked bullshit, but the screen faced away from me so I didn’t have to watch it. I couldn’t hear the TV either, even though I knew it was on because it captivated my wife’s attention. It reminded me of the time I tried to carry



JACKIE RUSTED

"I've been clean and sober nine months,"  
which is a weird thing to brag about  
while hopped up on morphine.

on a conversation with my friends at a bar after drinking way too much cough syrup. I couldn't hear a word they said, even when they shouted directly into my ear, yet I could discern with perfect clarity the lyrics blasting out of the juke box. *Shot through the heart, and you're to blame, you give love a bad name (a bad name).*

At the time, this was undoubtedly true. I did give love a bad name, but now I was focused on the whole shot-through-the-heart thing. I tried to concentrate, but was distracted by the rush of water coursing through invisible pipes, the woman in the next room who sounded like she needed drugs more than I did, nurses coming and going, asking questions, giving instructions, their departure punctuated by the rattle of the curtains that partitioned the rooms. The curtains were

fascinating, and worthy of further study. Decorated with gigantic purple dahlias, they undulated in an invisible breeze.

Me: Look at the dahlias, big purple dahlias...

My wife: They're dandelions.

Me: But they're so big. And purple.

My wife: They're not purple, Jim, they're blue.

I'm not accustomed to winning many arguments with my wife, and the prospect of prevailing while under the influence of morphine and Dilaudid, a combination a friend in Arkansas who has seen the inside of numerous ERs calls the "Snack Pack," seemed dubious at best. Besides, I didn't want to argue with my wife, who seemed more beautiful, caring, and patient by the minute. But I took photographs of the curtains, for documentation.

The Filipino doctor returned with the data from the EKG: I wasn't having a heart attack. My heart was fine. He advised me to make an appointment with my general practitioner and released me. By the time I signed all the paperwork and changed back into my street clothes, it was well past three o'clock in the morning.

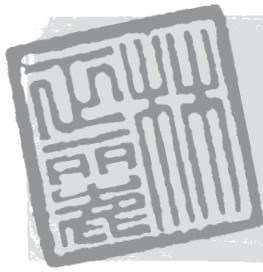
"How's your pain?" my wife asked.

"What pain?"

"You are something else."

With one arm in a sling and another wrapped around my wife, my heart never felt better.

—Jim Ruland



# MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

**“Emphasis  
on fucking  
hittable.”**

# Hustle Like You Mean It

Regular people don't say these things to strangers in exchange for money. But I do.

I stand in front of couples on date night, small groups of friends, and once a secret society of bearded bears, to holler golf-related innuendo. They've all gathered into a bare, drafty room in downtown Portland so that I can take their tickets or cash, check their IDs, and give them my safety talk before they venture off to play demolition derby putt putt, something part art installation and part man-eating miniature golf course.

Everyone who does the door at Smash Putt gives different versions of the schpiel, my take on it skews obnoxious.

"This is what's gonna happen. You're gonna go in there and shit your pants because you're doing putt putt with robots and beers. You're gonna wanna hit everything because everything is gonna look so fucking hittable." Emphasis on *fucking hittable*. "But what I need you to do is to not swing your putter with excessive force because you might hit someone in the face. And that's not cool."

"If your balls fall into some kinda contraption and it looks like it may be too dangerous to grab your balls." Emphasis on *your balls*. "Don't grab your fucking hittable. We'll happily grab your balls for you or give you new balls." Watch men's eyes light up. "Because we don't want you to get hurt."

"Which leads me to: if you do get hurt and/or die, we are not responsible nor are we liable for your deaths and injuries. You're responsible for your own death. Me? I get paid cash and I'm gonna go home and sleep very well tonight. I don't give a fuck." Emphasis on *don't give a fuck*. Smile like I'm selling Girl Scout cookies. Everyone's happy.

The more obnoxious I am, the more high-fives I get. This is what I do now for money, trading in asshole-ness. But it's only temporary. The folks who run the self-proclaimed "miniature golf apocalypse" will pack up and leave town in a couple weeks, and I'll have to hustle my wares elsewhere.

\*\*\*

When Joni and I talk about being regular, we're not discussing our bowel movements. We're talking about how we are so unlike our mothers and how when our folks were our age,

they had families, mortgages, and the idea of stability. We're talking about how we have fleeting moments of doubt about how we've conducted our lives thus far—and now we're catching up to playing grown-up versions of ourselves. We placed thick bookmarks right before the chapter on adulthood and left them there. Now we wonder if we should have just gone through the story of our lives without pausing and plowed ahead with security in mediocre careers, khaki pants, and polo shirts.

"But regular people are content, right?" I asked.

"Regular is lame."

"Regular people have purpose, right?"

"Regular is lame," Joni repeated.

We both know she's right, but I can't help but to ruminate because I'm lost. I'm trying to figure out where I'm supposed to go, but there are no directions. At least regular folks have committed themselves to a lifestyle that's been mapped out: get job → job pays for family → buy things for family → spend rest of life paying for things → forget that you once had dreams for greater things → stay at job → go on annual two-week vacations to see sanitized versions of different locales → go back to job to pay for vacation → quarter/mid/late life crisis → teach your kids to do exactly as you've done → rinse → repeat.

Fuck. Regular *is* lame.

So, now what?

So, we hustle.

We're constantly moving, buzzing, orbiting between cities, relationships, and jobs in an effort to convince ourselves, and those around us, that we're worthwhile. We hustle for money and time and the things in between.

Me? What do I hustle for?

I hustle for quiet respites between hustling so I can sit with my hands and write stories, embroider the names of my friend's kid onto pillows, or push play on the new Reigning Sound record because I enjoy music again. I hustle to get on the guest list so that I can save my cash for booze, and when I stand by the amp I can feel the alcohol and the guitars buzz through my entire body. I hustle to feel things because I worry that our hearts will atrophy with time if we don't force vitriol and ambition through it. I've seen too many folks, with lines around their eyes, who

feel like they blinked and lost ten years to a desk job to not be afraid of the same thing happening to me.

I hustle for mascara and eyeliner to brighten my eyes, so then when I flutter my lashes at a boy, he'll know I'm saying, *I like you enough at this moment, and it's possible that I might like you more in the future. Then maybe one day when we're both tired and weary of chasing and being chased, we'll settle into each other because you and I are good for each other. Because no one wants to be alone.* I hustle to meet other hustlers. I hustle because sex is fun and love is worth taking risks for.

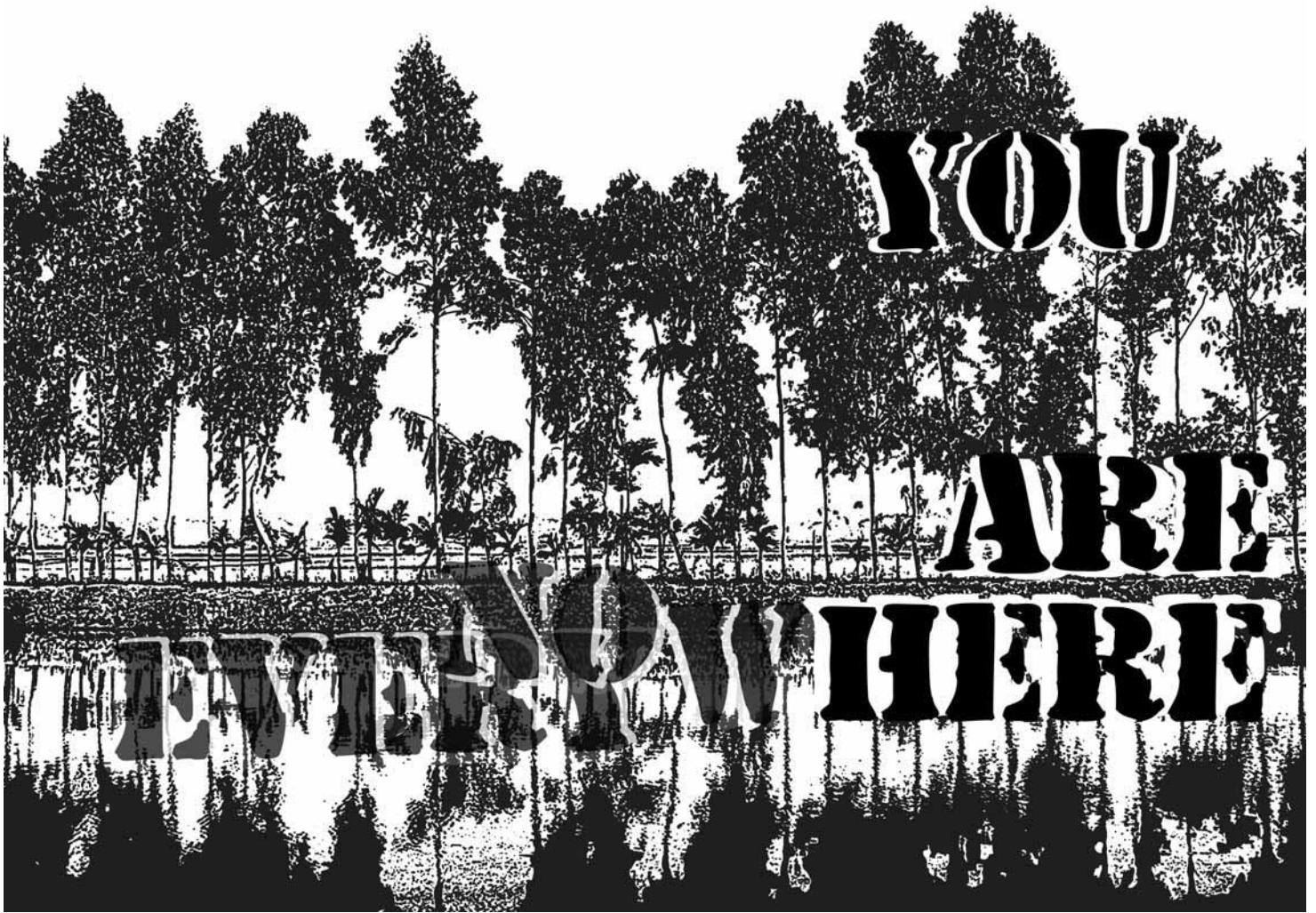
I'm grateful that many of my friends hustle for the same things—to avoid mediocrity—so that I don't feel like I'm unrealistic or irresponsible for wanting what I want. I hustle because I refuse to believe that the breath of the human experience is limited to what we know, and I don't know shit. I hustle so that when I wake up in the morning I don't feel like I wasted the day and night before.

I hustle because being regular isn't an option. I don't want it and it don't want me.

\*\*\*

DanE hustles whimsy—trading smiles for a place to sit. A pink-white-brown flag whips above his shop in southeast Portland, where he churns out artisan truffles and chocolate handlebar mustaches on a stick. His chocolates release endorphins and memories like the ants on the log chocolate that taste exactly like a scoop of peanut butter in the shallow groove of a celery stalk with raisins crawling atop. When folks see his mustaches, a curvy piece of chocolate with little lines scratched in to mimic the scraggly texture of facial hair, they can't help but smile as they prop it beneath their nose and right above their lip—looking like a distinguished gentleman.

"I realized something," he said at the end of a long day. "I was sitting on my couch and relaxing." I imagined him reclined into the soft cushions, surveying his living room of bare essentials: his dog Jack springing around, the oil painting of a ship in rough waters above the fireplace, the stack of records leaning against the wall. "I realized this is what I hustle for—a place to sit."



AMY ADOYZIE

# We're constantly moving, buzzing, to convince ourselves, and those around us, that we're worthwhile.

This reminded me of where I was seven years ago, fresh out of university and ready to attack the world. I landed the job—the career—that was supposed to propel me into adulthood, 401Ks, and retirement. After my two-year tenure, I was earning more annually than my father did at the factory job that he'd had since I was born. When you opened the "A" book in your Encyclopedia Britannica collection and thumbed through to "American Dream," there was a Sears portrait with my mug in it. But I was unhappy because I spent more awake hours at my work desk than I did at my apartment. I hustled for a place to sit, but was so busy hustling that I didn't even have time to enjoy it.

It was a Shel Silverstein moment to behold. *The Giving Tree* is my favorite children's book with its lesson in selflessness (or codependency) and how we hustle. The boy hustled the tree's apples, its branches, its trunk until nothing was left. Decades later, the boy returned as an old man, bent over, wrinkly, and without pants. The tree apologized, for it had nothing to offer the boy except its stump. The old man—defeated, grey, and lost—took a seat on the stump and the tree was happy. I suppose we, as children, were to surmise that the boy was happy too. After years of hustling, he could finally rest.

But Silverstein didn't show us the boy's hustle. He didn't show us how the boy sold those apples, or how he built that house with the tree's branches, or how he hollowed out its trunk to make a boat to sail away from his unhappiness. He didn't tell us how to avoid being beat down or that getting beat down is just another part of growing up. The story didn't teach us how to hustle; it just told us that we will. It told us that we will be lost. It told us that we shouldn't be afraid of it because maybe it's worth it.

—Amy Adoyzie  
amyadoyzie.com





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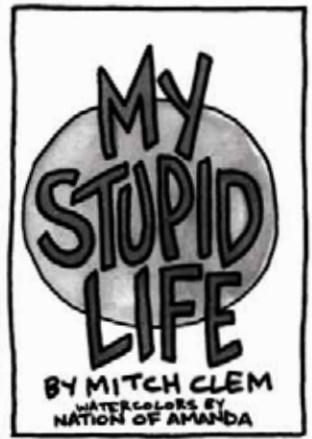
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THE PAGE?

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ALRIGHT...



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...SIR?  
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## MY LIFE AS A TIRELESS ADVOCATE OF RACIAL EQUALITY ((AS EVIDENCED BY MY HALF-BURNING SCALP))

Holy Saturday is a weird day. Coming between Good Friday and Easter Sunday as it does, Holy Saturday is to Easter what the Elite Eight round of play is to the NCAA basketball tournament: Something that gets a name simply because it's sandwiched between two way more important things. I mean, i was raised Catholic, and i couldn't tell you if i'm supposed to eat meat on Holy Saturday or not. Like, is there some special way i'm not supposed to have fun that day? Plus, this got me to thinkin' on the matter: If Jesus died on Good Friday ((begging the question of what the fuck was so “good” about it—like, who named this day, the Romans?)), had his dead body lie in a cave for three days like the Bible® says, then emerged on the third day, wouldn't he have returned on a MONDAY, not a Sunday? Do the math—any video store in America says that Jesus was only checked out for TWO, not three, days! In any event, the only cool thing i ever remember happening on Holy Saturday was Ho-Sat 1984, which was the first time i saw Black Flag ((if you care to do the calculations, now you know my shame: That was, indeed, when the band was on the “My War” tour—meaning that, yes, Henry Rollins was in the band at that time, so, no, i never saw Black Flag when they were any good)). That particular excursion was most notable owing to the fact that we had eight dudes crammed into my friend Chris's dad's Pontiac® Bonneville™ land yacht—we started out with four in the front and four in the back, but even in the Bonneville's spacious confines, four guys in the front seat was snug to the extent that Chris couldn't move his arms to operate the steering wheel—so they kicked Brendan Dirkman out of the front seat and made him sit in the back with us. Since there wasn't really room for five guys in the back seat, we made Dirkman lay across the floor, and converted him into a human ((well, humanoid)) footrest. Midway through our two-hour journey to Milwaukee, we stopped to pee and get gas, and i, no doubt stricken by some misplaced Catholic Holy Saturday guilt, noted that the current travel

set-up was perhaps a WEE bit unfair, thus it was only right that we now rotate our positions in the car, so that the squished can become the unsquished, and vice-versa. After moderate bellyaching, everybody decides my plan is a fair one, and, after massive punker migrations, the people in the back seat become the people in the front seat, the people in the front seat become the people in the back seat, and everyone is in a different spot in the Bonneville™—except for Dirkman, who, inexplicably, winds up face down on the floorboards of the backseat again, this time with different people's boots in his back. Well, i tried. So anyway, yes: Brendan Dirkman acting as a humanoid footrest all the way down to Black Flag in Milwaukee has, thus far, been the *ne plus ultra* of all my life's Holy Saturdays. However, Holy Saturday 2010 promises to overturn Dirkman's Lament as the Most Notable Holy Saturday Event Of Record—because Holy Saturday 2010, ladies and gentleman, is THE DAY THAT I DYE HALF MY HAIR BLACK AND BLEACH THE OTHER HALF WHITE! *That's right! That's right!* My hair shall become a veritable follicular A&W twist cone! A tonsorial Harvey Dent! A living manifestation of Bele, or Lokai, or whichever half-white/half-black guy it was that Frank Gorshin played on “Star Trek,” unless i'm thinking of the half-black/half-white guy, in which case *fuck you, Frank Gorshin!* And, as Mojo Nixon said in “Don't Want No Foo-Foo Haircut On My Head,” *I DID IT ALL FOR BROTHERHOOD!* With bleach bottle in hand, i take my stand for racial tolerance in women's flat track roller derby! Half my hair's gonna be black, half my hair's gonna be white, and all my hair is gonna live together in perfect harmony and *YOU'RE GONNA LIKE IT!!! HAIR SHALL OVERCOME!!!* So anyway, i suppose i should set the stage for this grandiose follicular hoop-de-doo a bit: As you may or may not know ((nor care)), i announce for women's roller derby these days. And, as it happens, just this week, a news story with the not-at-all sensationalistic title of “ROLLER

DERBY LINKED TO WHITE SUPREMACISTS” ran in a state paper, detailing how a start-up roller derby league in North Central Wisconsin turns out to have been founded by an apparent white power skinhead and his wife ((his wife's jersey number is “88”—she claimed ignorance of the fact that “88” is white-supremacist-ese for “Heil Hitler” [[“H” being the eighth letter of the alphabet or some god damn thing]]. I mean, jeez, even \*i\* know that, and i'm a fuckin' NERD, ya know? [[what's worse is that “8” is my favorite numeral, so i have a number of eights tattooed on my arms. If i ever wind up in the pokey, i think i'm gonna have some ‘splainin’ to do, and fast]])). Now, it's a free country and all, so this dude and his wife can believe in whatever the heck it is they want ((although i will admit that i never really understood the whole “white power” thing. So what happens, you wake up in the morning, go “hmmm, what color were the guys who walked on the moon? White? Hmm, me too! I guess my work here is done!” then roll over and go back to sleep?)). It's not like roller derby could be a particularly fertile grounds for proselytizing new recruits to the Wacky World of White Power® anyway—you'd probably have about as much success trying to start a branch of the Communist Party at a NASCAR race—so i don't really have a huge problem with the fact that two people involved with roller derby have views at odds with my own. What i DO have a problem with is that this story got picked up by the local Fond du Lac newspaper THE SAME WEEK AS MY LEAGUE WAS SCHEDULED TO HAVE A BOUT IN FOND DU LAC ((in point of fact, they ran the “ROLLER DERBY LINKED TO WHITE SUPREMACISTS” article *on the same page* as an ad for our bout—an expo bout between a black-clad team and white-clad team titled, ironically, the “BLACK VS. WHITE” bout. *Hyuk!*)). This troubles me because, whilst waiting on a Greyhound in FDL several years ago, i saw this fat ugly fuck walk out of Hardee's® wearing a Klansman-embazoned t-shirt with the

caption "*The REAL Boyz In Da Hood*"—meaning that, in my mind, if any fucking moronic racist monkey business is gonna go down somewhere as a result of this article attracting the tender attentions of white power boneheads, i have NO DOUBT that said shit is gonna go down in Fond du Lac ((i should also add that Fondy is the only city where a crowd hated my band so much, they actually lit me on fire [[1987 WAPL Battle of the Bands... my band, Depo-Provera, beat out some local Molly Hatchet cover band, incensing the patrons to such a high degree that i swiftly found my ass completely aflame {{and not in a normal, healthy, pegging kind of way, either}}. As i attempted to extinguish the flames on my ass, my buddy Time Bomb Tom drops the guy who lit me on fire, causing the whole bar to jump him, so me and bass player Depo-Pat grab Tom and run for our lives out to my car, where, lights off, we burn rubber out of the parking lot with a carload of these Fond du Lac dirtbags in hot pursuit. We eventually lose them on some back roads. It was like something out of the *Blues Brothers*. It was great]])). So, here's how i imagine the evening going down: The bout will be awash in racist roughnecks; they will drag me out of the rink, set me ablaze, and burn me on the front lawn of the one black family in town. Guess it beats riding to Milwaukee face down on the floor of a Pontiac®. Thus, there i stand: A bottle of bleach in my right hand and a bottle of black dye in the other. I add the required components to each bottle and start shaking. The bleach becomes a blue paste, reminiscent of marginally more gelatinous pool table chalk. The dye looks like a cross between Guinness® and dog diarrhea. I squirt stuff into each palm, and start twacking away. My scalp starts burning immediately on my bleachy side. There is language in the instruction sheet that warns to keep the bleach "a quarter inch away from the scalp at all times." This reminds me of those warnings that used to come with blank VHS tapes, warning you to keep them away from sources of magnetism, including VCRs. The black dye doesn't burn, but it runs all down my face and ears, and all over my glasses ((i'm doing this myself and i can't see otherwise)). The white side of my mind looks and feels like it's melting. **MY HAIR!!! MY SIGNATURE HAIR!!!** Eventually, i can't takes no mo', and i jump in the shower and rinse the chemical soup off my noggin. When i emerge, my hair actually does not look half bad—except it's more



## My hair shall become a veritable follicular A&W twist cone!

black and yellow than black and white. Oh well, i guess the black folks and the Asian folks gotta get along too, ya know? I dress for the gig in black leather Chucks®, white pants, a white shirt, a black jacket, an 80's keyboard tie ((to maximize my "Ebony & Ivory" quotient)) and a checkered glove. If i'm gonna get burned on somebody's front lawn, you're damn right i'm gonna look good whilst roasting! I enter the roller rink with a few beers in me, to take the edge off the sting of my flesh charring later in the evening. It's all for naught. The expected Caucasian

barbarian rampage fails to materialize. The crowd is peaceful to a fault. I can only assume their racist agendas WILTED IN THE SIGHT OF MY BITCHIN' TWO-TONE 'DO! I manage to exit Fondy unlit. The next day, i am dining at the Golden Corral™ in Oshkosh with my girlfriend's family. The manager—a gentleman of color named Rodney—tells me he likes my hair, clearly confirming my 'do has solved America's racial woes. Word.

Love,  
—Norb



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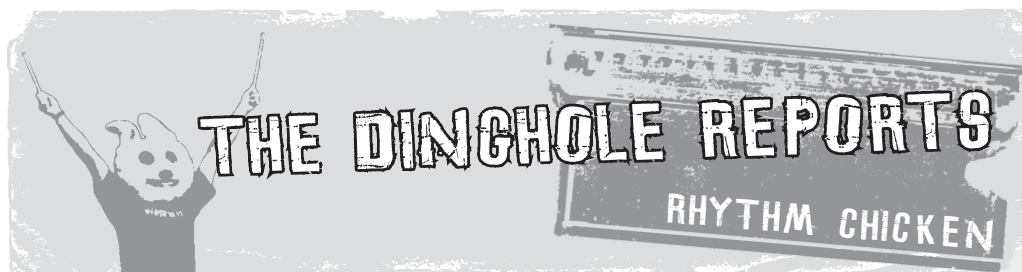
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NO. 20

"THE HORROR,  
THE HORROR..."

•ART•





**"I just  
about laid  
an egg."**

# Chicken Jovi

The Dinghole Reports  
By The Rhythm Chicken  
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)  
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

*{Excerpts taken from the police blotter section of the Boulder City Review, the local newspaper in this lively town I call home this winter.}*

**Jan. 3, 5:42 p.m.**

*"Police were warned to keep an eye out for a female who had broken up with her boyfriend at the Hoover Dam and expressed thoughts of jumping."*

Boulder City is a great little town. It has everything a small town needs: a greasy spoon diner, a bowling alley, a small theater, a barbershop, a drug store, a Masonic temple, a Rotary Club, and a small town newspaper. Every week a new issue comes out. Every week my Main Hen and I go straight to the inside cover where one finds the local police blotter listings. In this quiet town, just outside of wild Las Vegas, the local police have surprisingly little to deal with. I've even heard a few locals elaborate on last autumn's "jaywalking sting operation"!

**March 19, 8:52 p.m.**

*"A drunk 16-year-old male on Capri Drive crashed on his bicycle and hit his head."*

(Okay, okay, we get it. Quaint quiet little town, bla bla bla. This better be the calm before the storm, and by "storm" I mean RUCKUS! – F.F.)

I've gotten into a rather tame and steady routine here in BC. Monday through Friday I get up early, do my physical therapy stretches, walk to work, work, walk home, and relax until bedtime. Weekends are spent in tourist mode as my hen and I travel to various nearby points of interest (Death Valley, Area 51, Mount Charleston, St. George, Laughlin, Eldorado Canyon, etc.). I've become a Monday through Friday nine-to-five. I've become a meek little member of society. I've become, dare I say, boring. Through all of this painful mediocrity, my Chickenhead has been collecting dust in my bedroom closet. Through all of this,

the Boulder City Review police blotter continues listing the mildest of events.

**Jan. 1, 1:04 p.m.**

*"A man went to Boulder City Hospital because he was bitten by a cat."*

[Really, Mr. Chicken. These small town reports are cute at best, and correct me if I'm wrong, but cute has no place in a punk rock magazine. – Dr. S.]

So, here it is late March. I've been here almost four months and not only has there been no Chicken ruckus, but I've been totally absent from any live punk rock action. I'm dangerously close to getting my punk rock club membership card revoked. So close to the Double Down Saloon, and I have somehow not stepped foot there once this year! The Dive Bar, The Beauty Bar, hell, even The Joint or House of Blues. I have not been to any event even remotely punk rock. No ruckus? No live punk rock action? I fear this may very well be the end of my surly soapbox ramblings! The hooshwash has come full circle! A reverse prophecy is near fulfillment!

**March 20, 10:36 a.m.**

*"Police received a report that a male juvenile was walking in the area of Avenue G and Fifth Street with his pants pulled down and no underwear on."*

(Well, at least now these little Mayberry quips are getting interesting! – F.F.)

[Again, Señor Chicken, as your doctor, I really must recommend you get to the punk rock material before midnight when you turn back into a pumpkin, or a rabbit, or some other silly thing. – Dr. S.]

Well, my Main Hen and I were at the MGM Grand in nearby Las Vegas. We were backstage at the Bon Jovi concert, drinking Dashboard Confessional's beer and enjoying a pleasant gathering of Wisconsinites under very odd circumstances. My attention was then steered to a gentleman passing through the dressing room. Of all people, it was Peter Moffet (former drummer of Burning

Airlines, but more substantial to this chicken, former drummer of Government Issue). Peter is one of the two best punk rock drummers I have ever seen live with my own two eyes (the other being Dave Grohl when he was drumming for Scream). I still listen to the album *You* regularly and marvel at the raw and rock-solid drumming geniusness of this recording.

Like an awe-stricken teenager, I inch up to the percussive idol and peep out, "Mr. Moffet, I saw you play with Government Issue at Kutska's Hall in Green Bay back in 1987. You are one of the two best punk rock drummers I've ever seen!" He politely mutters something like, "Yeah, that was a long time ago," and tries to get back to his job. Then one of the present Wisconsinites informs him that I am the Rhythm Chicken, to which he should surely be totally disinterested, or at best, mildly confused. His face instantly lights up as he replies, "*You're the Rhythm Chicken? I saw you play outside of a Burning Airlines show in Minneapolis!*" I just about laid an egg.

**March 18, 8:46 p.m.**

*"Police received a call from a woman on Bronco Road who said her frozen food delivery was stolen from her doorstep."*

(WAIT, WAIT, WAIT ONE HOOSHWASHIN' MINUTE! **BON JOVI?** You were at a Bon Jovi concert? **BACKSTAGE?** Boy, Mr. Rhythm Redneck, as if you weren't flirting with punk rock excommunication before, now you're **SURELY** an outcast! You were mere blocks away from the Double Down, and you opted to see **BON JOVI?** At the MGM Grand? Sweet Lord Baby Jesus! You've really jumped the shark this time! – F.F.)

[Honestly, Chicken Jovi, I can't help but think this is the final nail in your punk rock coffin... but... the run-in with Peter Moffet may indeed be your quirky and unlikely salvation. Go on. – Dr. S.]

There's really not much else to tell. I was really more interested in chatting with my fellow Wisconsinites (of which one was my trusty photographer, Dan "the Eggman"



BILL PINKEL

# A reverse prophecy is near fulfillment!

Eggert, who was at the MGM for a photo convention). I guess I also found it funny that Dashboard Confessional's guitarist asked my Main Hen if the Rhythm Chicken wears the head to bed at night. He will have to find that out the hard way!

**March 18, 2:34 p.m.**

*"Police received a report that someone in a gold Ford Thunderbird was speeding, flipping other drivers off at Railroad Pass Hotel & Casino."*

(Alright, Chicken Pants. This stalling has gone on long enough. Do you have any new ruckus to report or don't you? – F.F.)

**Dinghole Report #113:  
Random Quickie Ruckus.**

(Rhythm Chicken sighting  
#200-something-ish)

We were all belly-up to the bar at JJ's La Puerta in beautiful Sister Bay, Wisconsin. Ruckus Thomas leaned over to me and slurs, "Thith wood bee a good time for sum ruckuthhh!" I ran out to the trunk of my car and threw the rusty Chicken kit up in record time. My opening drumroll drew a few rowdy drunks out of the bar onto the sidewalk. I pounded out my furious Pabst-rock. They cheered their furious Pabst-cheer. I packed the kit away and was back at my barstool within a few minutes. Dave the bartender slid a full beer in front of me. Ruckus Thomas leaned over again and said, "The things yoo doo to get a beer 'round here!"

[Really, Mr. Chicken? That pathetic attempt at pulling up eight-year-old ruckus will not divert attention away from your certain banishment from the punk rock circle of trust! – Dr. S.]

My bag of tricks is deep, my friends. Though, in all honesty, I do have a new and most righteous goal. I, the Rhythm Chicken, must make it into the police blotter of the *Boulder City Review*! I will not rest until my antics are reported next to surefire winners such as...

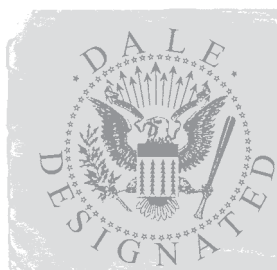
**March 17, 12:30 p.m.**

*"Police received a report of a bee swarm in a Seventh Street backyard."*

(Someone called the police about a bee swarm? – F.F.)

[I gotta find a different column to edit. – Dr. S.]

–Rhythm Chicken  
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com



I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

“Essential listening, Corky!”

# Mats, Drama, and Furs

There's always been a peculiar thing about the 1980s: A lot of people dismiss the commercially exposed music from that time as throwaway drivel that was part of a decade up to its eyelids with bad hair and clothes that'd make most store mannequins jump into a fire. Bad fashion decisions and hair-don'ts aside, there actually was a good amount of music (shitty theme from *Ghostbusters* aside) that was and is still worth your attention. Yes, this music was indeed signed to major labels, yet really never got the full due that it had indeed deserved.

## THE REPLACEMENTS

A perfect case in point was The Replacements. Originally constructed together as a band in 1979, The 'Mats first released three brilliant full-lengths and an EP from hell on their local homeboys' Twin/Tone Records label from 1981 to 1984: *Sorry Ma Forgot to Take out the Trash*, *Stink*, *Hootenanny*, and *Let It Be*. To say that these four releases possess some of the most straight-from-the-heart and balls-out rock'n'roll would be a very misleading understatement. I can't even pick and choose off of those first four—it's like trying to pick cuts from The Candy Snatchers' *Human Zoo*! Impossible, mang. Many bands to this day, try and try again with no avail to re-create what The 'Mats did during this early era of the band.

One of the last pioneering label heads, Seymour Stein, soon signed The 'Mats to his Sire Records label and the band went into the studio with OG Ramones drummer Tommy Erdelyi at the production helm to record what a lot of fans consider to be their most near-perfect release, *Tim*. To this day, *Tim* still sounds as fresh as it was the day it hit the shelves some twenty-five years ago in 1985 with tunes like “Bastards of Young” and the ever-haunting acoustic “Here Comes a Regular.” Soon after, guitarist Bob Stinson was let go, supposedly due to his clashing musical direction and incessant habit of getting his sip on.

Weirdly enough, the next three albums to follow from 1987 to 1990 were pretty much Paul Westerberg solo-sounding records (not that that's a bad thing) bearing The Replacements name: *Pleased to Meet Me*, *Don't Tell a Soul*, and *All Shook Down*.

A lot of fans speculate that once the catalyst of the original lineup started to shift, that the band's direction shifted as well, kind of the same way KISS started sucking pyrotechnic horse cocks when Ace Frehley left the band, but that's an entire column of its own. Murmuring hints of a 'Mats reunion have been teasingly quoted in interviews by Paul Westerberg and Tom Stinson over the years, but with the 1995 death of Bob Stinson and the repeated decline to a reunion given respectfully by drummer Chris Mars, any possible 'Mats reunion might just be... well... like going to see the half-assed (literally) version of KISS these days. And don't start complaining, cocko. Sometimes it's just better to let sleeping dogs lie.

## DRAMARAMA

Another fine example is a Wayne, New Jersey-based outfit by the name of Dramarama. Now, before you go spouting off something to the likes of “Dramarama! Ain't they that one-hit wonder band that played that ‘Anything, Anything’ song?”, please refrain from doing so, or at the very least, put a fucking sock in it. First off, the name of the song is entitled “Anything, Anything (I'll Give You),” and, secondly, Dramarama is nowhere near being nothing-but-a-one-hit wonder band. Getting the band rolling back in 1982, Dramarama started to find their niche and soon released their independently pressed *Comedy* five-song EP on Question Mark Records in 1984, which fetches quite a shiny dime these days amongst fans and record collectors alike. With the EP piquing interest overseas in France, the country's New Rose label was hot to put out Dramarama's debut LP, *Cinema Verite* in 1985.

Rodney Bingenheimer, the guy who helped out many an independent and/or punk rock band in his days on his “Rodney on the ROQ” show on L.A. radio station KROQ, got very hip on Dramarama. Their cut “Anything, Anything (I'll Give You)” went berserker, with calls pouring in from all over the L.A. area for requests. Their debut got re-released here in the States by the Elektra-distributed Chameleon Records, and with the band getting some monetary momentum going, they made their move from New Jersey to the sunny coastline of Los Angeles, CA.

It must be stressed at this point that even

though the band broke fairly well (with a single on an indie debut with very little to no push from Elektra), that this debut is a wonderful collection of songs, worthy of sitting amongst the most particular rock'n'roll fan's record stack. In 1987, the band once again put out their own independent second release on Question Mark, *Box Office Bomb* (one of my personal favorites). All I can say about this LP is that if you don't like it, there's a very good chance that I won't like you (yes, really). With songs like “It's Still Warm,” “Out in the Rain,” “Steve & Edie,” and “Spare Change,” you'd have to be a fucking retard with your helmeted head up your ass to say it doesn't rock your socks off. Essential listening, Corky!

Back onboard with Chameleon, Dramarama then released *Stuck in Wonderamaland* in 1989, which gained them some more airplay with the single, “Last Cigarette,” even though there's a huge chunk of rockers planted in the grooves of that vinyl. Because the band wrote and recorded so many tracks for *Stuck In...*, a collection of cuts from the studio sessions were released on the New Rose label under the band name The Bent Backed Tulips.

Chameleon Records soon went tits-up, so Elektra proper signed Dramarama, and the *Vinyl* album was released in 1991, amidst an overflowing sea of surfacing grunge puke on the market that stifled the band's first major label-backed LP. Regardless, the record held its own and even garnered a few more radio faves before the band released its 1993 *Hi-fi Sci-fi* blast of a record, with some heavy-duty production, as well as the hard-hitting Clem Burke (Blondie) behind the drum kit. The results delivered a fantastic album, but the band splintered following its release and tour, leaving its members to their own devices for quite a while. John Easdale, the band's cool as-all-hell singer, got himself and his two guitarists (Mark Englert and Pete Wood) back in action around 2004 and with the addition of a new rhythm section, released *Everybody Dies* on the 33<sup>rd</sup> Street indie label. Dramarama still performs today, and for earning almost thirty years of going through the rock'n'roll wringer, that band still packs a mean punch live and doesn't disappoint (unlike some of their “'80s reunited” band counterparts).



CRAIG HORKY

## No keytars allowed, kook!

### THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS

One band that has to be mentioned here is The Psychedelic Furs. And no, don't *even* fucking go there—the band is *so* much more than that “Pretty in Pink” single they re-recorded for the 1986 John Hughes film with the same name. The original and better-sounding mix was included on their second

LP released in 1981, *Talk Talk Talk*, which also includes one of their greatest cuts ever, “Mr. Jones.” That second album still holds very strong to this day.

Going back a year prior, the Furs' self-titled 1980 debut sounded more like a singles collection than a first attempt at a full-length, and that's a beautiful thing. Spin that debut, and I'll be a monkey's asshole (monkey's uncles are overrated) if songs like “Sister

Europe” or “We Love You” sound as if they were recorded over thirty years ago. 1982's *Forever Now* and 1984's *Mirror Moves* pack in the jam gems like “Run and Run,” “Goodbye,” “Forever Now,” “Here Come Cowboys,” “Highwire Days,” as well as familiar staples like “Love My Way,” “President Gas,” “Heaven,” and “The Ghost in You.”

Their 1987 album, *Midnight to Midnight*, is probably the least favored amongst Furs fans, even though it contains the hit “Heartbreak Beat,” simply for the fact that the whole recording process was rushed (even singer Richard Butler attests to this fact. It's the one LP that he wishes he “could right”). The band's final two records, *Book of Days* (1989) and *World Outside* (1991) were met with not-so-enthusiastic mixed reviews, to which I've always wondered why, because these two releases are solidly consistent in the vein that the Furs always delivered the goods with prior to their *Midnight...* release. “Should God Forget,” “Entertain Me,” “Until She Comes,” “Valentine”—that shit's tight, as are the rest of those final two rekkids.

One of the greatest things about the Furs is that they weren't scared to implement keyboards and/or synthesizer (no keytars allowed, kook!) in a way that it didn't lame up their sound, as did the heavy implantation of saxophone throughout the band's catalog. It works, trust me. There really wasn't any other band like the Furs and there hasn't been since. And, yes, they still continue to slug it out live, touring every so often worldwide, even though it's just two of the original members (singer Richard Butler and his brother, bassist Tim Butler). They're still worth the time to check out, for Richard's frontmanship alone. Truly one of the '80s unique best, and for all of their releases, it's a damn shame that they, too, never achieved bigger, better status than some of their craptacular '80s counterparts.

There are obviously a slew of other '80s bands that should definitely be mentioned here, but the above three have always been my favorites for years that stuck out in my mind as bands that exceeded musically way beyond the kind of jive that was being mass-fed commercially on FM radio at the time. There was (and still remains) ca-ca rock, and with a little digging, there remains the good rock. Don't be afraid to fight for the good fight.

I'm Against It  
—Designated Dale

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# WON TON NOT NOW

BY KIYOSHI



HOW TO SAVE  
YOUR BAR SEAT

ONE WAY TO SAVE YOUR SEAT AT A BUSY BAR IS TO LEAVE YOUR UNFINISHED DRINK ON THE BAR COUNTER COVERED WITH A NAPKIN OR COASTER.



TELL YOUR BAR TENDER YOU'LL BE BACK

IN MOST BARS THERE IS A UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU WILL BE BACK TO FINISH YOUR DRINK AFTER GOING TO THE POTTY, HAVING A SMOKE OR A PHONE CALL.



OOPS! YOU FORGOT TO COVER YOUR DRINK WHEN YOU LEFT AND IT GOT BUSSED OFF THE COUNTER. YOU LOST YOUR SEAT AND YOUR DRINK SON!



HERE'S WHERE TIPPING BIG ON THE FIRST ROUND PAYS OFF. DID I FORGET TO MENTION THE BIG TIP ON THE FIRST ROUND? IT'S IMPORTANT. HERE'S HOW IT WOULD WORK



THE BARTENDER WOULD RATHER HAVE YOU AT THE BAR OPPOSED TO SOMEONE WHO WON'T TIP WELL.



THINK ABOUT THIS THE NEXT TIME YOU LOSE YOUR SEAT, THE BAR TENDER DOESN'T VOUCH FOR YOU AND IT TAKES FOREVER TO GET A DRINK YOU FUCKING FUCK!



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THEY SHAKE YOUR HAND AND THEY SMILE AND THEY BUY YOU A DRINK THEY SAY WE'LL STICK WITH YOU TILL THE END

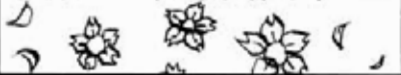


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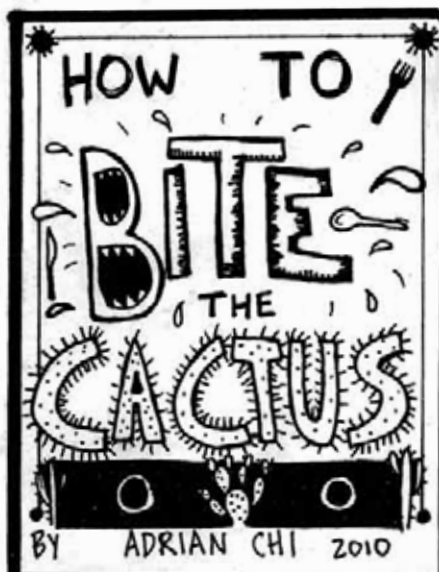
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## SQUEEZE MY HORN GARY HORNBERGER

**"The simplest form of wisdom comes in a tiny black and white zine."**

# Goodbye Uncle Hobe

It's no wonder people have mid-life crises, because when a person gets to their forties, those who are twenty years older will say you're just a kid and those who are at least five years younger tell you you're old. Well, what the hell is it? The bigger problem is you're reaching the age where the elders in the family who were supposed to be around forever are passing away. So I say to you all: stay as young as you can for as long as you can. I say this because we've lost a considerable amount of relatives in the past few months and the cold sting of reality seems to be slapping us around more than usual. There should be a break in there somewhere to resume normal blood flow, shouldn't there? The latest passing was an uncle of mine who I feel exemplifies what an uncle should be: that guy you see really infrequently because he lives on the other side of the country, but treats you really well when you go visit him. That was my uncle Hobe.

In 1979, I was fourteen and still young enough to be impressed by trivial happenings. That summer my family embarked on one of the best family vacations we ever took by train from Los Angeles, destined to Philadelphia by way of what seemed every state in the union. I remember a lightning storm in Albuquerque, waiting for cattle to cross the tracks in Texas, skimming a corner of the state of Colorado, and stopping for a week in Kansas City to visit Aunt Shirley and the cousins. Traveling by train, while beautiful and fun, was uneventful. We were never on time to any of our destinations. From Missouri we went through the Southern states. I remember chugging past the state capitol, I think in Georgia, and seeing the Confederate Stars and Bars flag. The South reminded me a lot of Riverside: ten years behind the times and unwilling to give up the fight. Finally, we arrived just outside of Philadelphia and there waiting for us was uncle Hobe.

I don't know why I always felt my uncle was a big man; more so in action than in girth. The man was Yul Brynner bald, with a big smile. On that day, he was modestly dressed. I say modestly because on a regular basis my uncle wore pants and shirts that, technically, would be okay on a golf course.

We once peeked in his closet and I'd swear I saw a techno-colored raincoat in there. It was something we'd joke about but, at the same time, it was very endearing. Uncle Hobe was well off; I would even say he was money bag rich. He owned two homes—a summer and a winter one—and they were big. The one we stayed at had a forest for a back yard and a community lake. He had also played a round of golf with Arnold Palmer. I saw the picture. It was with other framed pictures that sat in piles around his desk at home.

My uncle was rich, but unlike many, he wasn't concerned with his status. He was concerned with having a good time using his wealth. Once, when he needed to go shopping for cigars—which he needed to go in the cooler to get—we popped into the toy store because I was working on completing a set of baseball cards. I was looking through the clear packs to find the players I needed. My uncle asked what the hell I was doing and when I explained, he proceeded to take every pack off the rack and buy them all for me. Not because he had the money, and not because he was in a rush, but because he felt the chances were better if I got all the cards. Damned if he wasn't right. Just like all those golf pictures. Those pictures sat on the floor around his desk, not on the wall where he could swell with pride and brag. That was past. There were other things to do now.

He also took us to some ball games that summer. The first was a Phillies game, the best baseball game I've ever been to. The seats were so good that the only people in front of us were the players, right across from first base. We also had some colorful fans to the right of us who had to be restrained from jumping onto the field. Pete Rose had spit in their direction after they yelled "Charlie Hustle, my ass!" when he didn't run out a grounder to their satisfaction. Phillies fans are rough, but I did increase my vocabulary that night. After the game, my dad and uncle let us run around the stands to collect souvenir cups.

The second game my uncle took us to was a pre-season football game between the Eagles and the Giants. We took a different route to the game that time. We

found parking downtown and took the subway to Veterans Stadium. My first time on a subway in Philly was terrifying. The car we were in was packed full, it was hot, and the train kept stopping and everything would go dark.

Oh, and prior to this, I found out an interesting fact about the capitol building downtown. There is a statue of a man on top of a capital dome, I think it's William Penn, and he's holding a scroll in his hand. On rainy days going down certain streets, it gives the appearance that the man is relieving himself on the public walking below. My uncle told the story masterfully. As a fourteen-year-old, I almost relieved myself hearing him tell it. I think that story and my uncle knocking bumpers on cars trying to get his big old boat of a car into a space only a Mini Cooper would fit in were almost better than sitting on the fifty, watching the Eagles.

The last great story of my uncle's overwhelming generosity did not benefit me. It benefitted the family dog. One of the last nights we were at my uncle and aunt's, my uncle had purchased a couple tubs of ice cream and he encouraged me to take as much as I wanted. Having "as much as I wanted" backfired on me with Coke at my cousin's house earlier on the trip, so I decided that three scoops was pretty generous. Upon sitting down to my mountain of sugary goodness, I spied my uncle scoop out five mounds of ice cream into a bowl and whistle for the pet Irish setter. Can you imagine the way I felt being out-scooped by a dog?

Losing family is always rough, but being able to reflect back on the good times gives me momentous satisfaction. I may not have traveled back across the country enough as I should have, but I think the few trips I did take burned in some of the greatest memories that are clear, entertaining, and wonderful to go over and over with friends and family. Thanks, uncle Hobe. We love you.

**SOUNDS OF YOUR NAME**  
\$- ??

By Nate Powell

This is a wonderful collection of stories that will take its reader into worlds that have so much going on and then—all at once—are



GARY HORNBERGER

**Pete Rose had spit in  
their direction after  
they yelled**

**"Charlie Hustle,  
my ass!"**

gone in a wisp of smoke. Some of the worlds are surreal, and some are just fantasy, but they are drawn in a dark, ominous black that sucks you in and heighten the senses that, in some cases, leave the reader contemplating some impending doom. Many of the stories leave the reader doing some self evaluation, while others leave you with "What if?" This is the perfect book to sit down with on a rainy day and leave the hubbub of suburban life on the back burner. My favorite story is "Autopilot" because

of the artistry of the floating boat and the macabre tooth fairy-looking creature. This book is a delightful read for those who like a strong visual interpretation of a story. (Microcosm, PO Box 14332 Portland OR 97293, microcosmpublishing.com)

#### **GODDAMNAPOLIS**

\$- ??

By Alexandria Stillman

To be perfectly honest, I wanted to like this one but it's just too ordinary. To start

with, the artwork is just too busy. A lot of things go swirling by and the written word in some panels makes me feel like an archeologist. I find myself struggling to make out words. When I read that it was tall tales of the MPLS pop punk scene, I was excited, but it turned into one of the growing mountain of comics and zines of "my messed up life" that has been growing in my garage. Sorry, I'm going to say no. (Big Lump Books, biglumpbooks.com, alexandrastillman@me.com)

#### **BLACKGUARD #1**

\$7 U.S.

Various Artists

There is a reason this book is for adults only. If you're a religious person, this book is not for you and you will believe that most of the writers herein will be suffering in hell. For those of you who have a little bit of conspiracy theory and like the images the mass media transmits, you will probably enjoy this book. There is some good stuff in here, but I'm going to warn you now that what the church supposedly does behind closed doors is released in this book. My belief is that this is a ticking time bomb. (Blackguard, PO Box 93, Paddington NSW 2021 Australia, Blackguard23.livejournal.com, sstratu@gmail.com)

#### **TOO NEGATIVE #12**

\$ 1.00 U.S.

By Jenny Gonzalez

I'd like to apologize, for this comic has been sitting in the pile for awhile because I thought I'd already reviewed it. Who knew that little demons could romp and play and have so much sexual angst? I love the artwork in this one. It's kind of rockabilly demon stuff. They even have some Coop-sized demons. The story lines are funny, too. There seems to be a lot of deviant sex going on in hell, but it's nice to know they have ambulances down there when the dead overdo things. (lilrenoir@aol.com, toonegative.com)

#### **KING-CAT COMICS AND STORIES #70**

\$3.00 U.S.

By John Porcellino

This book is full of great observations on and about life. The artwork is clean and simple, nothing distracting. The panels about the jerk dentist and his beach-scene wall papered office are classic. I think my barber had a wall covered to look off the tee box of a par three. Who would have known that dentist and barbers were in on things? I also like the wisdom of Diogenes in the story "vegetables and kings." This one really makes you think and that's a good thing. The simplest form of wisdom comes in a tiny black and white zine. (John Porcellino, PO Box 18888 Denver, CO 80218, king-cat.net)

—Gary Hornberger

# THE FALL

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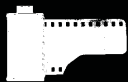
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**Dan Monick's Photo Page**

Good Job Stephanie! 02/28/10



**“And so I say  
to you, let us  
now praise  
ridiculous men!”**

## Peace Staffs Across the Potomac: A Voyage of Brave Men!

Attention amateur historians of the punk persuasion! We have reached a critical time, a veritable crisis!

The economic downturn has taxed our already limited repertoire of historical reference points. It is no longer sufficient to talk about the WPA, the hobos of the 1930s, and Woody Guthrie!

Yes, we must expand our lexicon beyond the historical events explained in the collected works of Billy Bragg!

And so, as a public service, I provide to you the story of Coxey's Army, one of the first major protests in our nation's Capitol.

If you already have some knowledge of this protest, perhaps from a brief mention in a radical history book or a Wikipedia entry, then you know that Coxey's Army was a group of unemployed men who marched from Ohio to D.C. to demand jobs. Their demands went unmet and the group disbanded, but historians credit the march with helping to ignite support for the Populist movement.

Sadly, this historical account is further evidence of my theory that historians are required to sign an anti-ridiculousness oath in order to practice their profession.

For the story of Coxey's Army is approximately twenty percent serious historical event, and eighty percent circus tents, theories of reincarnation, and sombreros! Seriously!

Let's meet the main characters.

There's Jacob Coxey, a resident of Ohio who managed to accumulate a sizeable fortune, in part due to his success at horse breeding. “One dark and rainy night,” (to quote the only decent book I've managed to find on this topic, published in 1929) Coxey was traveling home from work, “floundering in ruts and bottomless mud holes.”

To an ordinary man, an encounter with mud holes might not seem like such a big deal. But Coxey was no ordinary man. As he rode over the poorly maintained streets, he had an epiphany, a sudden thought that would change his life forever! Yes, the very definition of epiphany!

The federal government needed to hire all unemployed men to rebuild the nation's

roads! And Congress needed to exercise its power to print money to finance the venture, up to \$500 million, if needed!

Coxey sprung into action. He organized the J.S. Coxey Good Roads Association of the United States and appointed himself president. He asked Congress to sign a Good Roads bill, but there were complaints. People living in cities worried that most of the money would go to rural areas.

On New Year's Eve in 1893, Coxey pondered these issues as he tried to fall asleep. As he dozed off, the answer came to him in a dream! The solution? An upside-down castle where all your friends are there, except they all have different names? A strange school where no one is wearing clothes and all the teachers are half-unicorn, half-zebra? No! The answer: Non-interest bearing bonds!

Luckily, Coxey had a houseguest who was eager to listen to his dream-induced currency plan and immediately decided to devote his life to the cause! What kind of man would do such a thing? None other than Carl Browne, our second protagonist!

By the time Browne met Coxey, he had already worked in the following occupations: printer, painter, cartoonist, rancher, politician, and labor organizer. He was tall, overweight, and sported a long, dark beard. He rarely bathed, a practice which earned him the nickname “Old Greasy.” His standard outfit was described as “a buckskin coat with fringes, and buttons made of Mexican silver half-dollars, high boots, a sombrero, a fur cloak when the weather permitted, and around his neck, instead of a collar, a string of amber beads, the gift of his dying wife.” One reporter described his costume as something “a bad actor would use in playing the role of a wild and woolly cowboy.”

Old Greasy and Coxey became fast friends. Coxey asked Browne to move in with him permanently, and they brainstormed on how to put their plan into action. And then one day, Browne came up with an idea. A march on Washington! Or, as Coxey would later describe it, “a petition to Washington with boots on!”

Coxey had plenty of money to pay for it, and within months Coxey's Army of about one hundred men were mobilized and ready to travel from the Midwest to the nation's Capitol!

But before Coxey headed out, his wife gave birth to a son. Coxey decided to name him Legal Tender. He explained his rational choice to a newspaper reporter. “In after years, as he grows up, people will naturally inquire, ‘What is the meaning of that name? What do you mean?’ and questions of like import. It will ever be a pertinent reminder of the sovereign right of the government to use its own full legal tender as money.” Indeed!

It was once written (in this sentence) that desperate times call for ridiculous measures.

Perhaps that explains why the men traveled with a circus tent and why they spent their Sundays listening to Old Greasy's sermons about reincarnation and non-interest bearing bonds, which one witness described as “a strange mixture of prophecy and politics, of theology and finance.”

Crowds gathered to meet the men. In Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, the schools, factories, and mills all closed down to allow people to meet Coxey's Army.

As the men marched on, the need for Coxey's Good Roads bill became ever more obvious. The army struggled to make their way across, well, bad roads. Indeed, the trek was so arduous that by the time they arrived at the summit of the Allegheny Mountains, Coxey and Old Greasy decided to award their troops with “a souvenir for heroic conduct.”

The souvenir in question? A card signed by the pseudo-military duo. Ah, the prestigious trappings of Coxey's Army!

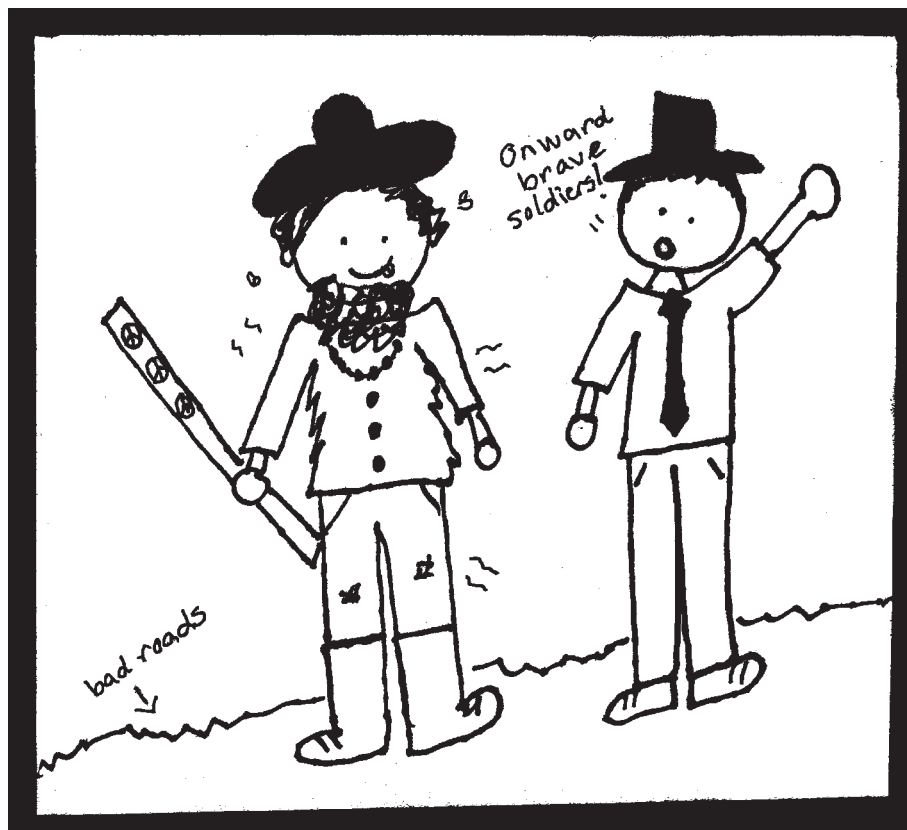
As the men marched, they attracted additional troops—the unemployed, the adventurous, the 1890s version of crusty punks. By the time they neared D.C., the army had about five hundred soldiers.

But the troops faced a difficult final march. The people of Maryland proved unfriendly, so Old Greasy handed out “staffs of peace”—four-foot long pieces of wood, to be used in self-defense. Question: who would win in a battle—a man armed with

It was  
once  
written

(in this sentence)

that desperate times call  
for ridiculous measures.



a peace staff or a man with a gun? Sadly, this question will go unanswered as the men apparently never had to use them.

The men neared their final destination. But before they could enter D.C., the troops had to cross the Potomac River. The historical importance of such a feat was not lost on the army's commanders.

They decided to pack the men, along with their horses and supplies, into several coal barges to travel down the river.

Old Greasy, or as he came to be known by that point, Marshal Browne, commanded the first barge, which he named Good Roads. The barge was followed by the J.S. Coxey, and "the Argus" or "Flying Demon" took up the rear.

In D.C., law enforcement officials prepared themselves for the army's arrival.

A local newspaper reporter wrote, "The growth and progress of this horde of dangerous characters are most serious matters for Washington to contemplate. It is time for Washingtonians to consider what can be done to avert the threatened invasion of the district by this swarm of human locusts."

Coxey's Army organized a parade to mark their entry into D.C., complete

with drums and cymbals. A soldier named Christopher Columbus Jones helped lead the festivities, which abruptly ended when the group reached the steps of the Capitol.

Coxey and Browne had planned to enter the Capitol building, but they were met by several dozen police officers, armed with clubs. In the chaos, Coxey, Browne, and another man broke away from the protest and tried to hide in some bushes, but Browne's sombrero attracted the cops' attention (seriously). Two police officers jumped on top of the men, and wrestled them to the ground.

The men were charged with a vile crime. Prosecutors said the men "did then and there step upon certain plants, shrubs, and turf then and there being and growing." In other words, they walked on the grass. They were ordered to pay a five-dollar fine.

While Browne and Coxey were carted away, police descended on the troops, beating the soldiers with their clubs and trampling them with horses.

Browne, released several hours later, roused the beleaguered troops with a speech about the importance of good roads and the life story of Belshazzar, the prince of ancient Babylon!

In the weeks that followed, other "armies" of unemployed men made their way to the Capitol. Many of them expressed annoyance with Coxey for failing to wait for them to arrive before he crossed the Potomac.

What happens next is a little unclear. Shortly after the grass-walking incident, the Pullman Strike broke out in Illinois. The labor battle spread throughout the U.S., leading President Grover Cleveland to send federal troops to end the strike.

Needless to say, the Pullman Strike attracted attention away from Coxey's Army. His troops eventually left D.C. Coxey later ran for several political offices, and lost. His son, Legal Tender, died in childhood.

As for Old Greasy, he returned to his home—a shack in Sacramento, where he worked to build a "flying machine."

Sadly, neither man earned much stature in the historical record. And so I say to you, let us now praise ridiculous men! Coxey and Browne, I salute you!

The end!

—Maddy



DOOT  
DOOLA  
DOOT  
DOO...

DOOT  
DOO!

## WHO ARE YOU?

**“It looks like your name has umlauts on it. You must love punk and heavy metal.”**

# Nardwuar vs. The Olympics!

The Human Serviette

### Nardwuar Vs. Figure Skater Johnny Weir

**Nardwuar:** Who are you?

**Johnny Weir:** [Holding table nametag] Clearly, I'm Johnny Weir and I believe you're Nardwuar, here for my press conference interview?

**Nardwuar:** I am indeed. Now, Iggy Pop, Johnny, loved to vacuum.

**Weir:** Did he?

**Nardwuar:** Yes, he did. I understand that you love to vacuum. I was wondering, is that true?

**Weir:** Absolutely. I literally vacuumed her condo [points to person beside him] before we came here. I am not joking at all because I cleaned her purse out for her while she was getting ready. That's the reason I'm late, because my agent was curling her hair and maybe I was a little bit, too. I was cleaning out her purse, and I made a mess on the couch so I vacuumed her couch. I did everything. So it's like a stress reliever.

**Nardwuar:** That's what I was wondering. Does vacuuming perhaps help with negative comments? And also I was thinking, what about food, too? How does that help with negative comments? On your reality series recently, you were pictured and filmed in your kitchen preparing food with your friend Paris, and you were talking to him about the proper way to cut cheese. Do you remember that at all, Johnny?

**Weir:** [laughs] Yes, well, I mean...

**Nardwuar:** I guess, what I was wondering is, what is the proper way to cut the cheese, Johnny Weir?

**Weir:** [laughs] I like you a lot right now. Well, just when you buy sort of a wedge of cheese at Whole Foods or something, there's the paper or plastic or whatever it is around the outside. It's very important to me that you cut it evenly so that when you cut a slice, you just cut the paper off as you go. Paris likes to cut the middle out around the paper, so he ended up wasting very valuable cheese. I mean, there are starving people in the world, so it offended my sensibilities, really, when Paris didn't cut the cheese properly.

**Nardwuar:** Well, thanks a lot, Johnny, and doot doola doot doo...

**Weir:** Doot doo-doo-doo.

**Nardwuar:** Almost. Doot doola doot doo...

**Weir:** Dun dun.

### Nardwuar Vs. Snowboard Cross Gold Medalist Maëlle Ricker

**Nardwuar:** Maëlle, I first would like to ask you a question about the high school you went to: Sentinel. We have your old athletics director here today, Mr. Randy Young.

**Maëlle Ricker:** That's awesome. [hugs Young] Hi, how are you doing? Thanks for coming down.

**Nardwuar:** Sentinel's a pretty interesting school, isn't it? You're not the only graduate. Like [author] Douglas Coupland went there, Hugh Hefner's wife. What can you say about West Vancouver? It's quite a unique place. The 7-Eleven closes at midnight!

**Ricker:** It's definitely a nice place to grow up. Lots of opportunities, amazing teachers, and coaches definitely putting time into the athletics program in Canada. I feel very fortunate to have been raised there.

**Nardwuar:** I was curious; I was checking on TSN.ca and they did an interview with you or a profile and it said, "If some of her colleagues are punk rock, Ricker is classical music."

**Ricker:** [laughs]

**Nardwuar:** Are you classical music? It looks like your name has umlauts on it. You must love punk and heavy metal.

**Ricker:** I like a variety of music. I don't know. [laughs]

**Nardwuar:** I thought I would give you some West Van punk here, Maëlle. This is some west Van punk. [Nardwuar gives Maëlle a Pointed Sticks LP] The bassist of this band, the Pointed Sticks, is Tony Bardach. And he is from West Van! Some punk for you, here. Congratulations on the gold medal.

**Ricker:** Thank you very much.

**Nardwuar:** So you're not classical. You're punk.

**Ricker:** Thank you.

**Nardwuar:** Back to West Van: Randy was saying that at B.C. Place years ago, you got an award when you were in high school and you were in B.C. Place getting an award.

**Ricker:** [Laughs] Yeah, I guess so.

**Nardwuar:** Now you return to B.C. Place with a gold medal from West Van.

**Ricker:** Yeah. It's lots of fun, I guess.

**Nardwuar:** You return to the scene of the crime. West Vancouver—what do you think about West Vancouver, like the West

Vancouver Fire Department? Did they help you out, too?

**Ricker:** [laughs] Yes, they have, actually. I was the recipient of the West Vancouver Firefighters Athlete Award, so huge shout out to them.

**Nardwuar:** How about going up Cypress Mountain? Do you ever get denied going up the mountain because you had a snowboard years ago? They didn't really like snowboarders back then, did they?

**Ricker:** I never had a problem. I was always welcomed with open arms everywhere I went.

**Nardwuar:** Keep on rocking in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

**Ricker:** Doot doo!

### Nardwuar Vs. Skeleton Gold Medalist Jon Montgomery

**Jon Montgomery:** Hello, sir. [Looking at Nardwuar's hat] Nice lid. I like that.

**Nardwuar:** Thanks! Congratulations very much, Jon. I think it's totally amazing you've got the gold. What I was wondering is, when you celebrated, you gave the devil horns — the metal horns.

**Montgomery:** My thumb should have been up, and that would have been the "I love you," because that's what we were going for.

**Nardwuar:** Do you know who invented the devil horns, though?

**Montgomery:** It might have been Alice Cooper. It might have been Ozzy Osbourne. It might have been one of those fellas, but if I'm not mistaken, it was someone well before that and I forgot the whole story about that. Maybe you can enlighten us.

**Nardwuar:** I heard that it was Dio and it could have been Gene Simmons. It made me think, Jon—your girlfriend Darla. I've seen some photos of her giving the metal horns as well, right?

**Montgomery:** Yup.

**Nardwuar:** So when you think about it, metal horns—Darla giving the metal horns, you giving the metal horns—you're on a skeleton, which is quite heavy metal, isn't it?

**Montgomery:** This is all heavy metal, brother. Same with that six-ounce gold in my pocket.

**Nardwuar:** And you are from Winnipeg, Manitoba. So are you into death metal, or are



I like you a lot right now.

DANNY MARTIN

you into the punk, like Propagandhi, a punk band from Winnipeg?

**Montgomery:** Absolutely. They're a well-known group and I'd be lying if I said that I hadn't listened to my fair share of heavy metal, but I'm not going to say that I subscribe only to that because I'm fan of, honestly, and it's not just a P.C. statement, but all genres. I've got everything from Beethoven to Beastie Boys on my iPod.

**Nardwuar:** Are there any specific metal bands we should know from Winnipeg or Manitoba that we can appreciate?

**Montgomery:** I wish I was more up to speed on the metal scene in Winnipeg, so I could give some of my boys some props, but unfortunately....

**Nardwuar:** But you do know Propagandhi, though?

**Montgomery:** Absolutely. Yes.

**Nardwuar:** They have a great song about Don Cherry.

**Montgomery:** Yeah, I'm familiar with that one. We saw them when I first moved to Calgary. I think they played at an event called Snow Jam, which was a festival that used to tour, and I'd been in Calgary for about a few days. I had an opportunity to check out that

event and I believe they were playing there.

**Nardwuar:** Well, congratulations again, Jon, and doot doola doot doo...

**Montgomery:** Doot doo!

#### **Nardwuar Vs. Short Track Speed Skating Gold Medalists Charles Hamelin and Olivier Jean**

**Nardwuar:** First off, congratulations on the gold medals. This is amazing. My question here is for Charles. I was wondering, how has Olivier's music helped with the gold medal? For instance, Olivier, you love the punky reggae party, don't you? So I was curious, Charles, how has Olivier's music influenced you to help get the gold?

**Charles Hamelin:** We all know that Olivier speaks soundly of music, and in Montreal, at the training centre, we can put music on during practice and we all put our music on. But when Olivier's music is on, it's always a different mood, but it's a really good kind of music. I think the music that he listens to represents him really well.

**Nardwuar:** Olivier, that's the punky reggae party that you're into. How did you get into the punky reggae party? Was it through ska

or local punk bands? What were the first punk bands you saw in Montreal or Quebec? Was it, like, The Planet Smashers? Were you into ska?

**Olivier Jean:** Yeah, I've seen The Planet Smashers. When I was younger, I used to listen to more punk rock, then I went more to ska, and then I slowed it down and ended up with reggae, which was more my vibe: slower rhythm and just a more relaxed mood.

**Nardwuar:** Is there any other skating team at the Olympics that is as cool with music as you guys—into ska and reggae? Is there anybody else that you heard? Did you hear anything else? Were you going to ask Damian Marley down to one of your practices?

**Jean:** [laughs] That would be really awesome and we're going to check it out. Maybe we're going to be able to set something up since we have gold medals now. We're going to see.

**Nardwuar:** Thanks so much and doot doola doot doo...

**Hamelin and Jean:** Thanks.

**Unidentified team member:** Doot doo!

To see these interviews visit [nardwuar.com](http://nardwuar.com)

# AN INTERVIEW WITH THEE UNDERTAKERS

## PART I



Roxy - East L.A. night 1980  
Art, Tracy Skull  
Berto - Mike  
Chaidez

## WORMING IN JAPANESE SHOES

LET ME PUT IT AS PLAINLY AS POSSIBLE: Thee Undertakers are one of the best bands from L.A. punk's first couple of waves that you've probably never heard of. Formed in 1977 in the heart of East L.A., the band quickly set themselves apart from the pack both with the black suits they preferred over the leather jacket look worn by the average punker, and energetic

live shows showcasing the rock-solid musicianship of vocalist Art Reyes, guitarist Tony "Fingers" Naranjo, bassist Tracy "Skull" Garcia, and drummer Mike Chaidez. Unlike many of their mohawked peers, Thee Undertakers were bona fide musicians who tempered serious chops with smart lyrics and sly humor. They recorded one doozy of an album in 1981. Handily

skirting between the roots-tinged punk of bands like The Gears, the catchy thug-pop that bubbled up from the suburbs, and the full-tilt hardcore that invaded from the South Bay's beaches, it was a veritable cornucopia of everything that made L.A. punk so crucial. Naturally, they broke up not too long after they recorded the album and, for various reasons, it remained unreleased until 2001, when it finally saw the light of day as *Crucify Me*. An equally awesome 7" EP of live and demo tracks, *L.A. Muerte*, soon followed on Artifix Records, and one track can also be found on Grand Theft Audio's *All for One, One for All* comp.

What follows is a synthesis of two interviews with Art, Tracy and Tony, filmed at Tracy's house in 2007 and 2008 by Pat Perez, Jake Smith, and myself for an upcoming documentary, *Eastside Punks*. Outspoken and funny as hell, they've stayed friends over the years and have also remained active in the underground long after Thee

Undertakers' breakup: Tracy went on to play with Moslem Birth/Peace Corpse, Moral Decay, Insulin Reaction, Knucklebone, Lydia Lunch, La Bestia, Dragstrip Demons, and currently plays guitar for the Woolly Bandits; Tony handled guitar in Rash, Play Dead, and Media Blitz, to name a few, and currently plays guitar in Jumping Jack Benny. Soon after the turn of the last decade, Thee Undertakers reformed with a new drummer, "Furious" George Hernandez, and spent a good part of the aughts (or whatever they're calling the '00s this week) again gracing stages across L.A. County. While other projects have rendered Undertakers gigs a very rare commodity in recent years, and so far no new recordings have materialized, they continue to get together on occasion and work on new material.

Interview by Jimmy Alvarado  
Layout by Daryl Gussin  
Hand lettering by Angie Garcia  
All photos courtesy of Thee Undertakers

Doey Kills Bar - Burbank 1980 Tracy Skull - Art



## AB INITIO

**Jimmy:** Let's start out, I guess, with where you were born and raised.

**Art:** I was born in Texas, El Paso. I was up there in 1955. My dad got a job; we came out here. I was five years old. Been here ever since. I grew up in Watts, dude. I went to 102<sup>nd</sup> Street School one year, and then we migrated to East L.A. from Watts about a month before the Watts riots. My dad was a great provider, my mom was a great mom, homemaker, but we went through the trials and tribulations of moving around six, seven times before we settled in up in City Terrace on Blanchard Street and Rowan Avenue. I went to Malabar Elementary, then Belvedere Junior High School, then Garfield High. I went to East L.A. College for two years, then I went to Cal State for a little bit, but I didn't like the quarter system, so I said, "I gotta go." [laughs]

**Jimmy:** How about you, Tracy?

**Tracy:** Same thing: East L.A., L.A. County,

born there. Grew up around Margaret and Repetto Streets near Garfield High, went to Garfield, Griffith Junior High, Fourth Street Elementary, all in a little area. It seemed at that time like there were those three schools and that's where you went, and if you wanted to go to college, you went to East L.A. College because everything was so close.

**Art:** If you had been a smart kid, you could have gotten...

**Tracy:** I could've gone to Watts just like you, right? [laughs]

**Art:** ...could've gotten a scholarship to Yale or something like that. [Everybody laughs]

**Jimmy:** How about you, Tony?

**Tony:** I was born in a Japanese hospital, right there in Boyle Heights, First and Fickett Streets. It's a convalescent hospital now, or kind of like a retirement place or something like that. Anyways, that's where I was born, and I was pretty much raised in the City of Commerce.

**Jimmy:** How did you meet up with these guys?

**Tony:** I was in a band with Mike, the very

first band I was in when I was first learning how to play guitar, in the eighth grade. Then after that, in high school, I ran into him about a year later, and we started forming another band. We had kind of like a cover band going, the classic rock stuff. Then Mike brought Tracy over. He was telling me about Tracy already, because they were going to Garfield at the time, and I was going to Bell Gardens High School. Tracy had some originals and he brought him down one day. Then we jammed one of his songs, "Death Breath," and that's how we started.

**Jimmy:** How did you get involved with music? The story is you were very good very young.

**Tony:** My dad was into music. He used to listen to jazz and Latin jazz and stuff, and he would get the congas out and start playing them. He'd give me some pots and pans to follow along, or a comb or whatever, just to mimic him, you know?

**Tracy:** Did it sound like congas? [Everyone laughs]

YOU'VE GOTTA BE DOWN TO EARTH WITH  
YOURSELF, LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND SAY,  
"IS THIS ME? DO I WANNA DO THIS?"  
AND ONCE YOU SAY,  
"HEY, MAN, THIS IS ME," **GO AHEAD.**



**Tony:** And then I had a friend who I was hanging around with when I was maybe about eleven. His dad had a guitar in the closet and he would pull it out. He was going to start taking lessons at the park, so I had my mom and dad buy me an acoustic guitar. I started taking lessons at Rosewood Park a little bit. My dad had a friend who played guitar, and my sister's ex-husband came over and gave me a few tips. I learned off of other people a little bit. Once I had the basics down, I pretty much learned from ear after that, with records.

**Art:** You've got to have a good ear to pick up fast. He has a good ear.

**Jimmy:** What was East L.A. like when you were growing up?

**Tracy:** Where I lived was near Atlantic and Whittier, and when they had the Whittier riots, I could get on the roof of where I lived and see all the fires and smoke. (The Chicano Moratorium of August 29, 1970, which saw an estimated 30,000 people marching down Whittier Boulevard in East L.A. in protest

of the Vietnam War, ended with Sheriff's deputies cornering, gassing, and clubbing people listening to speakers at a nearby park. Four people were killed, including journalist Ruben Salazar, who was sitting in a nearby bar drinking a beer when sheriff's deputies fired a teargas projectile into the bar and through his head.) If you go there now, well, you know how it is. It's totally changed. Back then, it was pretty dirty and it wasn't a pretty place, I'd say. Where Mike lived, we had to walk blocks just to get to his house.

**Art:** It was just a back house, a guest house in the back on Cleveland and Whittier Boulevard. It was a trippy little house.

**Tracy:** That's where we used to rehearse when we first started. We weren't rich, our families were struggling, but when we started hanging out together, that kind of became our family. Not like a gang, you know, we didn't want to be a gang or anything. There were plenty of them around there, and when we started dressing punk we'd get shit for it. People didn't understand it in the beginning,

but after a time, they were like, "Oh, okay, these guys got something going on."

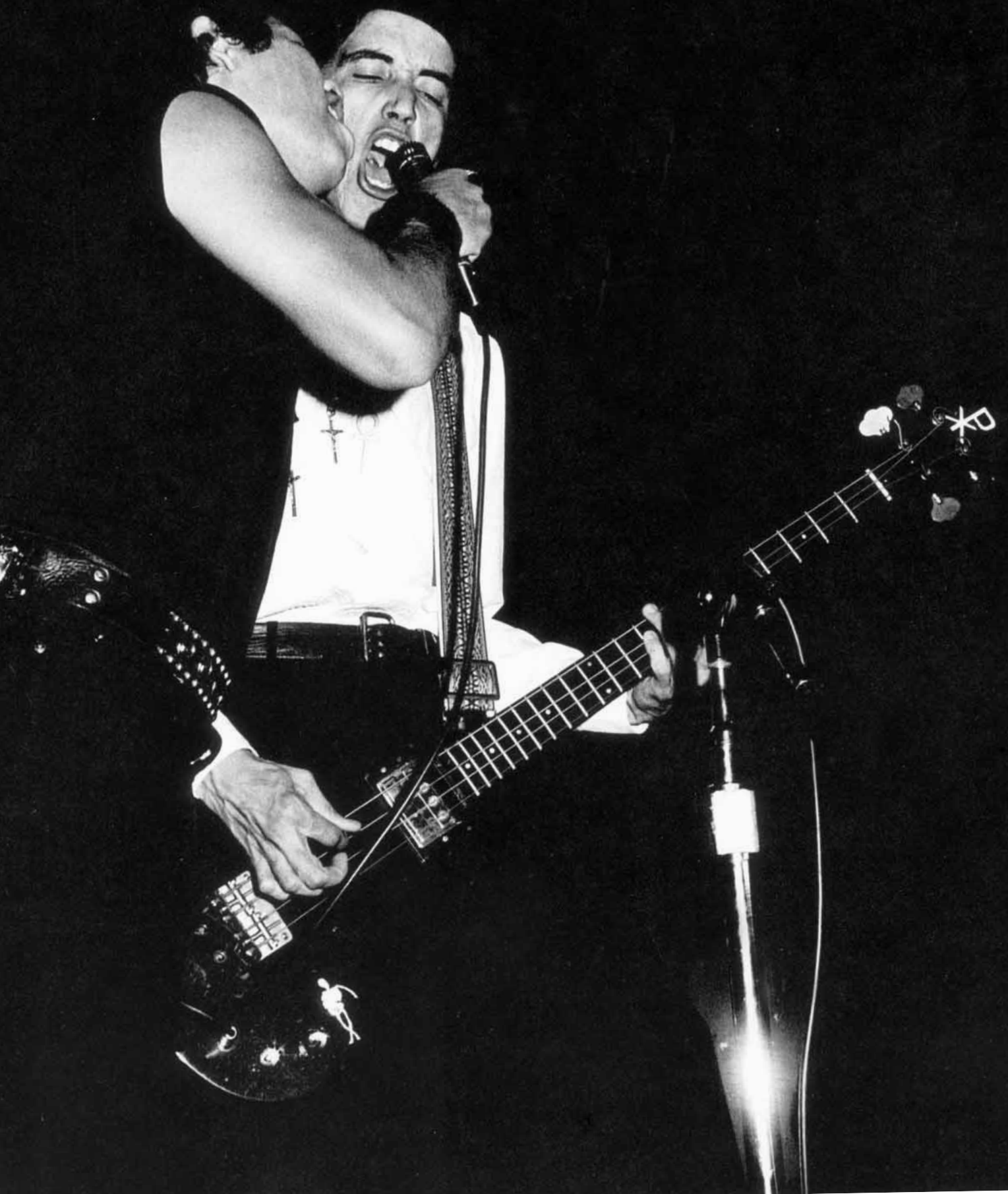
But in the early days, Art was playing in rock bands. Before the band actually got Art in the band, Mike was following Art's band around. Mike was all, "Hey, you've got to come to this party and check out this singer," because we needed a singer. We started out as a three-piece band with long hair and our first show was at Garfield where everybody was gonna bomb us with stuff. When we played, everyone was like, "Well, what the hell was that?" We're playing all this fast stuff, you know? Anyway, we went to check out Art at this backyard party, and they were rocking out. That was when you had your little scarves on the mic stand and were jumping around like Mick Jagger. [Art laughs] But it was cool because these guys could play, you know? Mike kept saying, "We should get Art in the band."

**Art:** You know me; I try to see things before they happen. With the band I was in, I was seeking the next step, which was original

Mike Chandez @ Roxy - 1980



Art - Tracy Skull @ Roxy 1980





WE START PLAYING AND CANS START  
FLYING AT US. I SEE GUYS AND GIRLS  
FROM OUR SCHOOL GOING,  
“YOU GUYS FUCKIN’ SUCK!”

I’M LIKE,  
“WELL, OKAY, WE’RE DOING SOMETHING  
WRONG, OR RIGHT. I DON’T KNOW.”

songs. It’s easy to play in copy bands and this and that. It was time to get out of the box, to go into something your own, but when you do that, you gotta have idols, you gotta have people you want to be like and sound like so that you can get a little sense from them and go on your own. You get an idea; you gotta do shit on your own, but then you’ve gotta be down to earth with yourself, look in the mirror and say, “Is this me? Do I wanna do this?” and once you say, “Hey, man, this is me,” go ahead. Before Thee Undertakers, Mike and Tony and I had played two gigs at Tony’s school, like a talent show, and we played Van Halen copies. Can you believe that? That was right before I met you (Tracy). I’m not too much into Van Halen, but we did that for Tony, and then we did this other one at some kind of elementary school, in the playground, remember? Then we brought some girls over to Mike’s house, Asian girls from your school or something.

**Tony:** Asian girls? No, that was probably some guy named Ray. He had long hair, yeah?

**Art:** I just wanted to get it on the record, because at that time that’s when Mike was coming around, following the Dead End Kids. That’s when they caught me, and these guys got together. Then Mike called me to come down and try out for the band, to see if I could cut it with gravediggers. [laughs]

**Jimmy:** Tell me a little about the Dead End Kids. Was it a punk band?

**Art:** No, it was just a rock band. We were probably the first to do Sex Pistols for that type of band. I was telling you about Billy Spider, and we had Mickey Hill on bass or C-Dog. I don’t remember which one. It would’ve probably been a punk band, but there was too much rock influence that the guys had. They weren’t what Thee Undertakers were. Like I said, I was getting burned out on doing copies and wanted to do original stuff. It was hard for Billy to write because he was always drugged out for

days. He lived in Hollywood, he was gay, great guitar player, but... He started writing originals toward the end of his life. He just passed away. He could’ve been a good punk rocker because he was punk rock. Dude, we used to see Van Halen at the Key Club, back when it was Gazzarri’s, and he went to the front of the stage and he got on David Lee Roth’s case. The bouncers chased him and Billy was jumping on tables! He was fuckin’ climbing the walls and they couldn’t get him, dude. [Everyone laughs] They stopped the show for about fifteen minutes so they could get Billy and throw his ass out. He was all fuckin’ whacked. He smoked PCP, running all over the place. Dead End Kids could’ve been a punk band, but it wasn’t meant to be.

**Tracy:** From what he was doing into what we were doing, he was like, “Well, these guys have originals. They kinda have the punk sound.” Plus with Tony, it was weird ‘cause he could play all these weird, creepy guitar lines and it just fit with the music. Sometimes it wasn’t even punk. I don’t wanna say goth, but it was like that spooky kind of thing. Then some of the songs we’d do weren’t spooky, like “Behind Closed Doors,” and “America’s Dream.” Those were taken more from, like—I’d hate to say the English punk, like The Clash—the more hooky stuff, you know? So we were experimenting with a lot of different things.

**Art:** But I knew Mike ‘cause Mike would always tag along. He was like fourteen and I was like seventeen, eighteen at the time. He was this little kid, real inquisitive, brainstorming. If you ever get to know Mike, he was like that. So we hooked up, and it was good. They had songs like “Grave Digger,” “Rosy Cross,” slow Black Sabbath stuff with these crazy beats. I was, “Well, you know, graveyard music.” [Tracy laughs] So I would bring stuff like Generation X over. “C’mon, let’s do stuff like this.” Eventually, everybody started getting ideas and it started

clicking. I would try to take some of the guys out to see what’s in Hollywood; what’s here, what’s there.

**Jimmy:** How’d you get into punk rock, Tony?

**Tony:** From Mike, because he was telling me about Art and The Dead End Kids. We started to get flyers, actually. I think he was reading in the paper about a show with the Go-Go’s and some other bands. I don’t think it was the Masque, or maybe it was. Who knows? We went in and there was graffiti all over. The Go-Go’s played. They had, probably, their first drummer. She had hair that was like this [stretches his hands over his head to indicate either spiked or big hair] and she had some teeth missing and she was going, “Fuck you!” [Everybody laughs]

**Tracy:** She was punk!

**Tony:** Spitting and shit. There was another band, I think, called Red Army. I think they were hardcore. And there was some other punk band, I think, that was playing a cover of “Fiddler on the Roof.” That tripped me out. When we walked in, though, we had long hair at the time. They were looking at us kind of funny, and we didn’t know that back then it wasn’t cool to have long hair going into a punk club, you know I thought I heard some comments as we walked by, but they left us alone other than that.

**Tracy:** We never really experienced the Hollywood ’77 punk scene. I think one time we actually got to see X, Black Flag, and the Stains off of Soto Street in Boyle Heights.

**Tony:** That was the one at the CSO. (The Community Service Organization is a civil rights organization founded in 1947 by activist Fred Ross and U.S. House of Representatives member Edward R. Roybal. Over the years, the CSO Hall in Boyle Heights has been used for dances and community events, including the occasional punk show.) We had a flyer for that one, too. That was one of the first punk shows I went to, too.

ART © ROXY 1980



THE THING ABOUT INFLUENCE  
IS YOU GOTTA HAVE IT  
**BEFORE YOU EVEN START.**

**Tracy:** This was like early '78 or something and they were just starting out. We kind of started in '77, but it was '78 when Art got in it, and like Art was saying, he had the concept. We used to have long hair. Everyone was like, "Oh, the Ramones, long hair," because that's what we started getting into. Now we gotta cut our hair. We're trying to get to the image part, just trying to cut it shorter. "What are we gonna wear? Leather jackets?" Art's like, "No. Black suits. You guys are called Thee Undertakers, so why dress punk?"

**Art:** Tracy had a friend who cuts hair, Victor Martinez. He had vintage clothing and he was in the credits for the first Los Lobos album. He was a senior and I was a tenth grader when he took me and showed me the ropes. Good, good friend of ours. So we took Tracy down there and Tracy had long freakin' hair, man. [laughs] Fucking never should have cut it in retrospect. It looked good, but he cut it. Tracy was tripping out, man. We sat his ass on the chair. [Tracy laughs] But we took this picture in a graveyard and Tracy's hair was still there in a pony tail, right?

**Tracy:** That's off the 45 (the *L.A. Muerte* EP on Artifix Records).

**Jimmy:** At Evergreen Cemetery?

**Tracy:** No, actually it's Calvary. We used to sneak in there.

**Art:** Yeah we used to go to the cemetery a lot.

**Tracy:** Calvary was the biggest cemetery in East L.A., so where do you do pictures? At Calvary.

## CALIGULA AND CANS

**Jimmy:** Okay, so you guys are in East L.A., and you've got gangs, you've got this whole car culture going on, you've got the Santana bands. What was it that made you not follow that? What was it about punk that made you say, "I wanna be a part of this"?

**Art:** The fuckin' distorted guitars, man. The power the music has; more thrashy and just more emotional. Your blood level rises and it takes you to a whole other level. I was listening to AC/DC—I loved that shit and I wanted to do copies of that—but I couldn't really sing like Bon Scott. And then he fuckin' died, too. [Everyone laughs]

**Tracy:** So he got scared.

**Art:** I'm influenced by everything, but, to me, the fuckin' thrashing of punk to get a statement across was just awesome, and Thee Undertakers started getting into that.

**Tracy:** I was a big Black Sabbath fan, so why not take the creepiness and make it faster? I just started writing faster songs, and then we brought Art in. It was almost the time of Reaganomics when we started writing the stuff, and that's why a lot of the songs, if you listen to them, they deal with a lot of the pressure we had in East L.A. because there was a lot of pressure. At school, if you looked different—nowadays, everyone's got a mohawk—but back then, Mike used to wear his pins all over his jacket and people were, like, "What the fuck's wrong with you?" We were young, but we had already

been exposed to The Dolls, The Ramones, Pistols, The Clash....

**Art:** Stooges!

**Tracy:** Stooges, all this stuff. You hear it in every single punk rock review or interview or whatever, but it actually influenced a lot of bands and it made us do stuff. Interesting point: We used to go from Mike's house down the street to this little Mexican bar and there would be this band playing. They totally fuckin' ripped, and there's these people sniffing paint. We're like seventeen, but they would let us in. To me it was kind of punk, 'cause they had the uniform. They all had the same thing—the bass player would have a cigarette stuck into the tuning peg and when they weren't playing, he'd smoke it, then put it right here [points between his third and fourth fingers] and play the bass. We were like, "Wow." We didn't get out much in the beginning, in early '77, to see bands. When we finally got to see bands, and when we started hooking up with Art, he would take us.... Where was that one you took us? The Clash, The Cramps, and Gang Of Four.

**Art:** I took them to see Gang Of Four; one of my favorites. Not only that, I took them to see *Caligula*. [Everyone laughs] At the Pussycat Theatre. That was a blast! [laughs]

**Tracy:** We weren't really playing then. We were still kind of honing our skills, but going to see this stuff. Once we had our songs down, once we had our look, then we started doing that weird show. It almost looked like the Beatles place when they used to play in Germany.

**Art:** Joe's. It was underneath Alvarado Street [in downtown LA], those big apartment buildings. It had like a big dance hall, like a dome, down there. Like a ballroom with two staircases and a dome. It was awesome, man.

**Tracy:** And it was packed. So we get up there, we have on our suits, weird red bands around our arms, rosaries, crucifix, whatever. We don't fit. We start playing and cans start flying at us. I see guys and girls from our school going, "You guys fuckin' suck!" I'm like, "Well, okay, we're doing something wrong, or right. I don't know." And then Art said, "Keep throwing cans. We've got your fuckin' money." They stopped throwing cans and started thinking, "Well, these guys have kind of an attitude." But we weren't going, like [cowers] "Ooh, cans." We just kept playing.

**Art:** When you're young and you're doing something different, people are going to have that negativism. People don't accept it then because they want to hear the commercial stuff. People are still commercialized.

**Tracy:** People were still into rock back then.

**Art:** But after a while, the next couple of weeks, you get this magazine that says, "Thee Undertakers are the next thing happening." Just this little underground magazine that came out, by the people who really focused on what we were doing, and you can see them on the side, like "Wow, what the hell's going on here? This is interesting." I kind of observe the crowd all the time, but lot of the

time I don't give a fuck. [Everyone laughs] We have all these kinds of songs and music. How to come at them, hook them, and bring them in? So we would do the set list, I'd ask Tracy, "Well, what kind of crowd are we playing to? Okay, let's do kind of a medium poppy set, not too hard where we're going to scare them away. We're gonna hook them and reel them in little by little," and we'll do "Behind Closed Doors," the mellower stuff. It depends on where we play.

**Tracy:** I think a lot of the early punk bands in East L.A. weren't even playing fast. They're more kind of like the Pistols and the Ramones, and the Ramones weren't even that fast. But it was more up-tempo than playing Led Zeppelin or a slow rock song.

**Art:** We were just looking for something new to make a statement about our surroundings, and you have this energy...

**Tracy:** That's where the lyrics started coming from, too.

**Art:** You've got this rage. You're into current events and things ain't going good at the house and around the neighborhood. Your friend just got stabbed. A little bit of everything.

**Tracy:** Like you were saying about the gang thing. What kept us away from that was—not that we had our own gang—but we were trying to start something and we just stayed away from all that. It helped to keep us out of trouble because we had to go to rehearsal. When Art came into the band, he was more business oriented. He was like, "No, guys, we have to do this, we have to do that," and so it kind of straightened everybody out. We were all freakin' delinquents before we met Art. We were all, "Yeah, man, we're in a band. We're bad, dude!" And then all of a sudden, we bring this guy in...

**Art:** I was the only one with a car, with a van. I had to pick everybody up, but I didn't mind doing it 'cause I felt something. When you feel something in your heart, in your mind, with your spirit, your soul, "This is good, man. This is positive."

**Tracy:** That's the main thing with a band. You gotta have that spark.

**Art:** It was good and we struggled through it, man. We did as much as we could at the time.

## UNDER THE INFLUENCE

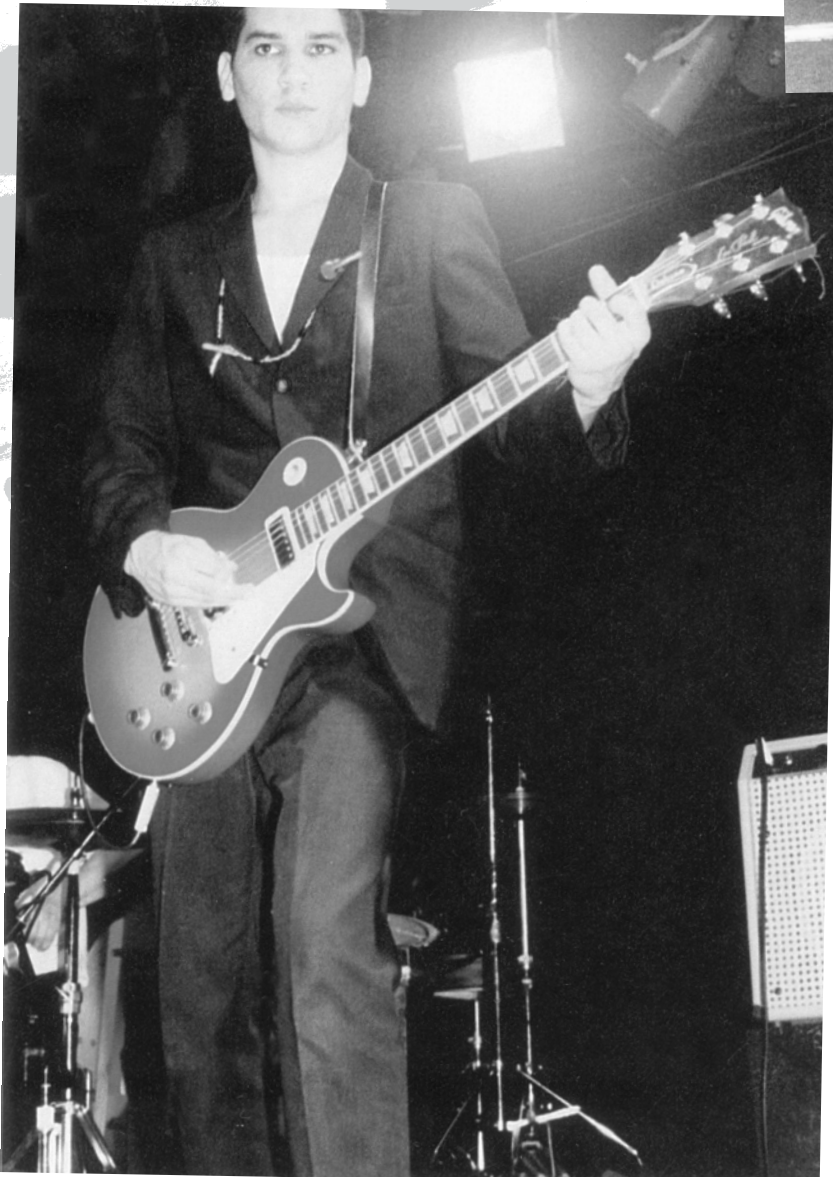
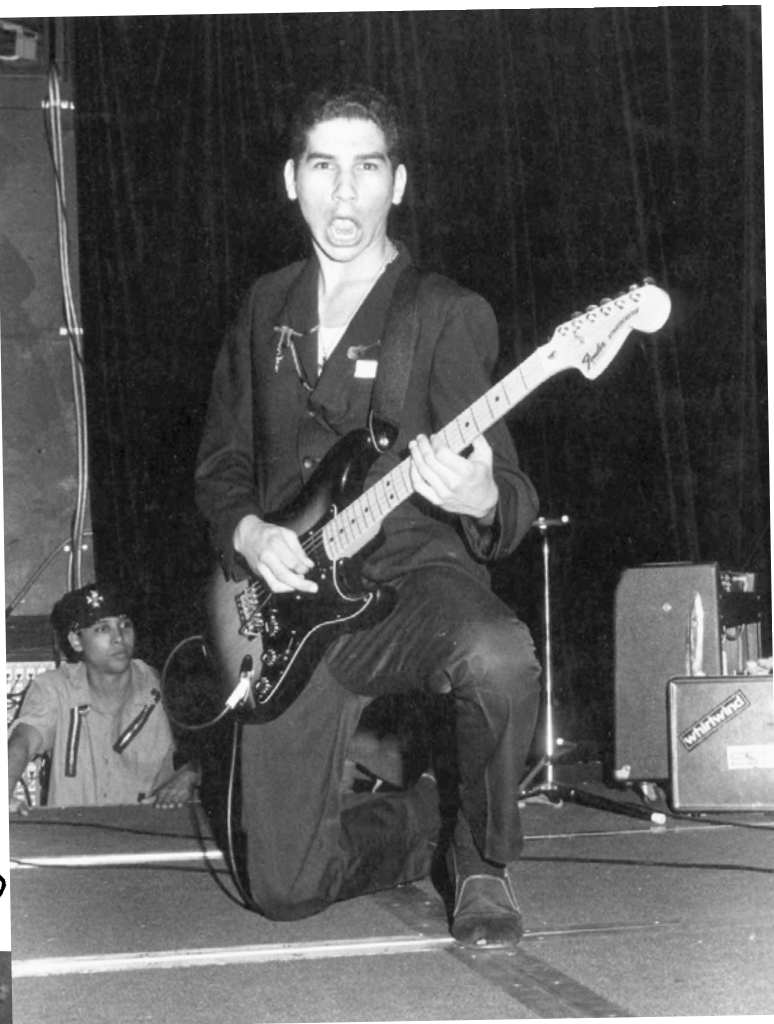
**Jimmy:** Obviously, you guys were influenced by the stuff in Hollywood, so you knew about that stuff.

**Art:** The thing about influence is you gotta have it before you even start. When you're four, five years old, you gotta have the music thing. You gotta listen to something already that your older brother, sister, uncles, aunts, your abuelita was hearing. The music was always instilled in me for one reason or another.

**Tracy:** My mom listened to '50s music, and so I listened to Elvis when I was growing up. And polka music, unfortunately, because of my grandma, but you pick up these influences. Some people grow up and they don't hear certain things. I guess, back when we were younger, you're hearing all

WE WERE JUST  
LOOKING FOR  
SOMETHING NEW TO  
MAKE A STATEMENT  
ABOUT OUR  
SURROUNDINGS,  
AND **YOU HAVE  
THIS ENERGY.**

Tony Fingers @ Roxy  
(2nd show) 1980



**YOU'VE GOT THIS  
RAGE.** YOU'RE INTO  
CURRENT EVENTS  
AND THINGS AIN'T  
GOING GOOD AT  
THE HOUSE AND  
AROUND THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD.  
YOUR FRIEND JUST  
GOT STABBED.  
A LITTLE BIT OF  
EVERYTHING.

this because you're walking down the street and you hear the Mexican bands or you hear this stuff coming out of record stores and you get influenced by it for a while. A different direction. I think that's what helped Thee Undertakers write because we had all this influence. We weren't just going to do three chords.

**Art:** If it's meant to be, it'll come together. I'm influenced by certain music, or a music period, and so were Tracy, Anthony, and Mike. It bonds us with one another.

**Tracy:** I think the main thing that people have to understand is that when we started the band, we knew how to play. A lot of bands, you'll hear, "We only knew how to play three chords." When Art came to see us, he was like, "Okay," because Mike was very...

**Art:** Mike was a very proficient kind of guy at a young age; methodical, but proficient, too. He was real technical, and Anthony was always a good guitar player. I remember playing my clarinet when I was going to Cal State. I had a clarinet class and I've played flute and saxophone all my life. So, anyway, I bring out my clarinet and I'm doing some Bach, some classical riff, and Anthony was already doing it on guitar back then. Anthony's gifted himself.

**Jimmy:** He was really young, too.

**Tracy:** Yeah, but he could do solos. I wasn't a great bass player, but they liked it because I kept it simple and you didn't have all these solos and these bass things. I like to set the bass powerful, so we had that power sound. Then you had Mike playing drums and Tony. We brought in Art and you had the chemistry of everyone jumping around and being crazy. In the early days when we used to play backyard parties and these weird little dive bars and whatever, people would just stand there, like, "What the fuck are these guys?" It was kind of interesting 'cause they didn't understand what we were doing. We knew what we were doing because we wanted to be different. We didn't want to be the same thing. When we saw the other punk bands coming out in leather, we said, "We don't want to be like that." We were trying to do something different and it did work for awhile.

**Art:** It must mean something, to connect from here to Hollywood, to all over the country, to Europe. Music magnetizes you. It gets you. And so what we were doing, other bands were doing it, too. It's like the movie *The Stand*. You have a calling, you know? We're doing it because we weren't programmed. We weren't directed to do anything. It just came about. It was just molding ourselves together—what we know, what we had, what we're into—and it came about.

**Jimmy:** Yeah. That's one thing about Thee Undertakers. You listen to the album and there's all kinds of shit going on there.

**Tracy:** Yeah.

**Art:** Influences.

**Tracy:** And we pushed our instruments.

**Art:** Not only that. We pushed ourselves. Tony wanted to do a certain type of style. Creepy's creepy. He'll do creepy shit all night if you let him. [Tracy laughs] And I

wanted to do some more mellow stuff. We have a song, "Second Set." It's a rockabilly song. That's by Tracy.

**Tracy:** That's like I was telling you—my mom listening to Elvis, Chuck Berry, and all that '50s stuff.

**Art:** But, at that time too, rockabilly was happening. It was starting to come around, in a sense, and it was good. But when you hear our song, it sounds like Thee Undertakers. It doesn't sound like anybody else. It sounds like Tony's guitar, Mike's drums, and my vocals. I mean, it just distinguishes everything. So if you hear a punk song that's fuckin' in your face, and you go to "Second Set," it's like, "Okay, the same guys are playing it." It's getting that sound, distinguishing yourself, and not trying to sound like anybody else. But you do sound like somebody else because of the influences.

**Tracy:** Everybody's influenced by somebody else. Any band, it doesn't matter. But sometimes the band that's influenced makes their own sound out of the influence, then they sound like their own. That's what we were pushing most of the time. Tony had his own guitar style. Nobody else in East L.A. was playing like him.

**Art:** And if you listen to "Death to..." and "Halls to Walls," the spiritual kind of stuff, and his guitar sounds like "wooooo..." I know it was done with effects, but one time I was hearing it and I was in bed, the room started spinning, man. When the guitar comes up during the solo, with the effect, the guitar goes, "wooo," and I go, "Whoa, man." But that's in the '80s, dude. When people hear it today—like this client of mine heard it— "Fuck, it sounds like today's music." You don't lose touch.

**Jimmy:** There's a timelessness to it.

**Art:** Right.

**Tracy:** If you look at how the punk scene progressed over time, everyone was trying different things and bands and musicians were getting better; not like the early days when the Ramones came out. They couldn't play. The Pistols couldn't play. All these bands couldn't play. As time went on, they got better and better and people were getting more...

**Jimmy:** Sophisticated.

**Tracy:** Yeah, and with us, I think we were just getting better and better. But it's a lot of work. People don't understand that, you know? That's why a lot of bands don't survive, or some bands *do* survive. You've got to put in that 110%, not just 100%. You gotta really be into it, but it doesn't work sometimes. I think we had a pretty good run for a while there.

**Art:** Today, if we get together and we spend about three, four weeks, say we're paid vacation to do the next CD, and somebody gave us money to kick it up in Big Bear and put us in a place to....

**Tracy:** Why Big Bear? [Everyone laughs]

**Art:** So we're isolated! 'Cause we're fuckin' up there in the hills, man, to do another CD, we could pop it off. But we don't have the time. Everybody's busy with projects. We

don't have money and we need to survive. We need to go to work, you know? But if somebody would've backed us up, I'm pretty sure if we signed a contract to do another CD or something, a lot of good shit would come out of it.

## FROM EASTSIDE BACKYARDS TO WESTSIDE BOULEVARDS

**Jimmy:** Did you feel any affinity or camaraderie with the Chicanos that were part of the original Hollywood scene?

**Art:** Not really, no.

**Tracy:** When we started going to Hollywood, X was the only band helping us out in the beginning. They helped The Brat out because nobody was booking us out there.

**Jimmy:** Why do you think that was?

**Tracy:** I think because X was interested in what we were doing. They saw a whole different scene and wanted to bring that scene to L.A.

**Art:** John and Exene came to East L.A. to see us at a backyard party. Right there in City Terrace, up on the hill.

**Tracy:** A guy pulled a gun out, started shooting in the air, and scared the fuck out of everybody. But they were there to see it. After that....

**Art:** They took us into an old 1938 bomb (slang term for a customized car) and said, "Hey, you wanna open up for us?" They had The Brat the first night and we were the second night, which was cool. We didn't see The Brat open up for X at the Whisky.

**Art:** We also had The Crowd and The Outsiders from Huntington Beach liking us, man. There was no racism, bro. It was about music. You could be black, white, yellow, red. It doesn't matter, man. When we fuckin' played, people liked it. "Hey, what's up? Wanna play?" Boom, San Pedro, boom, whatever. We played all over.

**Jimmy:** How did the Whisky show go?

**Tracy:** A screwdriver was thrown and embedded into the stage next to me.

**Art:** No, I thought it was a good gig.

**Tracy:** It was good, but the Hollywood crowd was a lot different from the East L.A. crowd. The East L.A. crowd, once they got into us, they knew who we were. When we went to Hollywood to play, they were just like, "Who the fuck are these guys?" And then you get the "wetback" thing and the "go back to Mexico" thing.

**Art:** That never affected me, though, to tell you the truth. I didn't give a fuck. I didn't care what they thought or what they said. I was just out there to do a gig and play our stuff. Pleasant Gehman (poet, author, belly dancer, former vocalist for Screamin' Sirens and Honk If You're Horny, and one of Hollywood's original punk contingent) set up a meeting with Ted Templeton. It was called HIT—Hollywood International Talent—and he had his office on Hollywood and Cherokee. He had us booking as one of his bands. We should have stood with that managing company. We didn't because we went outside the boundaries where they

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## A GIRL CAME UP TO ME SNIFFING GLUE OR SOMETHING IN HER SOCK, JUST WATCHING US PRACTICE.

wanted to book all the gigs and get their fifty percent. People would ask us, "Hey, do you want to play for us over here?" away from Hollywood. They found out one time and they got mad.

**Tracy:** But it was, like, Rudy's Pasta House, a little Mexican restaurant in Montebello. They started having bands and we happened to do a couple of shows there. The best show we did was us, The Gears, and I think The Brat played. We were playing and then I saw the crowd move. There was blood all over the floor and some dude—somebody had spikes on their fist, slugged him in the face, split his nose open. There was blood everywhere. Then after we played, they were trying to clean the blood up.

**Tony:** I went to the restroom and I think the guy who hit him was some guy I grew up with. [Art laughs]

**Tracy:** See? He brings his troublemaking friends to start stuff.

**Tony:** He goes, "Hey man, did you see that? I knocked that dude down, man!" [Everyone

laughs] He goes, "Yeah, that fuckin' punk rock shit's cool, man! They were doing that one thing—what do they call that when they start going in a circle—that slamming? That's bad. I cold-cocked someone real bad."

**Tracy:** So he thought slamming was with spikes on your hand, smash somebody, blood everywhere, and that's punk rock. The owner freaked out—"Oh shit. These bands are good, but there's violence." It was kind of violent, but not in the Hollywood way, not in the OC way, but in its own way because it was the East L.A. punkers. It was still good, because they didn't call the cops and they got the guy out of there. He went to the hospital, okay, no big deal. Everybody still had fun. It wasn't a Vex thing. It was another promoter going, "Oh shit, Joe's doing this. Can you do a show for me?"

**Art:** That was by Louie from Roadhouse Records (a now-defunct record store located in Montebello), who was also supposed to put out our record.

**Tracy:** Anyway, HIT got mad because we're playing Rudy's Pasta House. That was a big place for East L.A. for awhile. Even though we were still playing out in Hollywood, there were still these little places in East L.A. that were like, "Hey, we want to start playing bands here." And after a while, from playing at the Vex, people from Hollywood were coming up to go check us out to see what was going on. In the early days, there were no record labels in East L.A. putting records out for anybody, so we were just playing, making our own flyers, and we had to push our own gigs. Nobody had T-shirts or stickers. I can't speak for everybody, but I don't think that was on anybody's mind back then. It was more about just playing and having that look and trying to outdo each other, I would say.

**Art:** It came to a point where I said we've got to take it to another level, which was business-wise, to get our foot in the door. There were some labels looking at us and stuff, but we had to get a little more serious. Some of the guys didn't want to go that direction. Mike,

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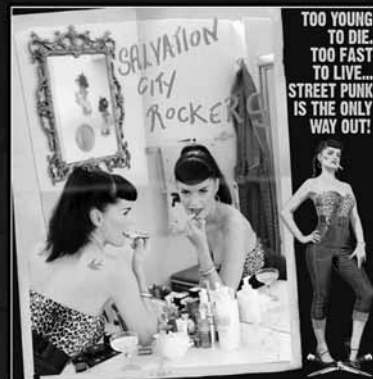
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our original drummer, said, "I don't care about making money. I just want to play what I want to play." That's fine. If you want to go that way and suffer from here on... But the thing is to do something with your body of work, and then once you get in, you can do whatever you want. Once you get in, and you are a great band, you could do whatever you want and people will still buy it.

**Jimmy:** You kind of touched on it a second ago, but the East L.A. stuff was kind of

and it imploded on them. But that's part of the history of any punk scene, you know? Everybody talks about England, New York, Detroit, Hollywood, but a lot of books don't mention a lot about the East L.A. scene.

**Art:** The East L.A. scene, there was some places we played that were good, like the Montebello Inn. That had a couple of stages there. The thing was we played everywhere and anywhere.

**Tony:** We tracked it in one day.

**Art:** I did all my vocals in one day, dude. If I had money, I would've fixed it up more. It would've been a lot better. I think it's good, but it could've been done better.

**Tony:** On his part. [laughs]

**Jimmy:** Why did it take twenty-odd years for it to come out?

**Tracy:** Because after the band kind of disbanded, the tapes just sat in limbo and nobody wanted to touch it. We didn't really

## A SCREWDRIVER WAS THROWN AND EMBEDDED INTO THE STAGE NEXT TO ME.

unique in that we didn't have a lot of the same resources that others did. Playing Rudy's Pasta House would've been a big gig because there were no fucking clubs. So in what ways do you think that the East L.A. scene was unique from Hollywood? We're all from L.A., but how was it unique?

**Tracy:** I think the style of the music was different. You had the Germs, The Bags, X, The Screamers, The Skulls, and The Weirdos. They all had their own individual sounds. Then you go to the East L.A. scene. We don't sound like any of the bands I mentioned, but you have Thee Undertakers, The Brat, the Stains, and Los Illegals, and the Illegals are more commercial, I would say, as far as the music. But the Stains caught my eye because they were totally dangerous at the time. I mean, I don't know how dangerous they were, but their music, when we saw them play, they were just like, "Arrrgh!" When we played, we weren't as aggressive as they were, but we still had Creepy Tony jumping around. The band moved. We weren't just standing there, like "Wow, yeah." The band, once we hit the stage, "Art's ready to go. We're all ready to go. Let's do it," and we get up there and do it. The Stains were the same way. The other bands were good, but that's where you got your different sounds.

**Art:** I never wanted us to get sloppy onstage. I don't like when people get sloppy, when they lose the focus of what they're there for. I saw Darby Crash. It was so sad to see him so wasted that he couldn't sing, 'cause I had my hopes high. And I saw them before he really got all drugged up. I saw him a lot in the scene and he was begging for drugs and begging for booze and I didn't want to go that way. If that's what he wanted to do, that's great. Great stuff he did, and great historical momentum he had, but too bad he couldn't capture it and be positive with it. But that's punk, man, you know? That's fuckin' punk.

**Tracy:** I saw Darby Crash's last band before he died. They weren't good. He came back from England and thought he was Adam Ant. Sid Vicious, same thing. They had something, they grabbed it, they took it for a while,

### TEMPUS EDAX RERUM: THE 20 YEAR SAGA OF CRUCIFY ME

**Jimmy:** Where did "National Hero" come from?

**Tracy:** Just the cockiness of people. That's pretty much what the song—the attitudes of people, whether it be political or on the street. The song was really short, but it fit because there were a lot of people out there who thought they were real bad asses and they really weren't. We always observed before we wrote, and when we first got in the band, I had most of the lyrics. I would give Art the lyrics and he would redo them to make it his style, because I wasn't the singer. When we first started, it was just the three of us, so I would be singing and I'd sing them my way, but when we got Art in, it was like, "You know what? We've got a singer now. Let him do the singing thing and let us just work on the music."

**Art:** I added a lot of stuff. He gave me this whole thing of lyrics at one time. Since they were already there, and they were good, I wasn't gonna change most of them, but just revise them, and add how I felt about the song.

**Tracy:** Well, since he's singing it, that way at least his power would come out of it. Instead of, "No, you've got to do it like this," it was more like, "Do what you think you would do to make it sound like you, to make it click with the band," and it did work.

**Art:** In the beginning, we—I wouldn't say argue—but we talked a lot about what could be done as far as our parts, and there was a lot of criticism between the drummer and the guitar player, and the guitar player and the drummer... [Everyone laughs] and everybody. They were always getting on each other. Mike would throw drumsticks, and he'd throw something.

**Tony:** Mike used to tell everyone how to play their instruments.

**Art:** Yeah, Mike was like that. He would critique, but you know what? All that paid off when we went to the studio and we did the album.

**Jimmy:** What do you remember about that?

**Art:** Everything came together, man.

**Tracy:** We recorded it in three days, I think.

communicate for awhile and we didn't play together for awhile. Everybody was just doing their own thing.

**Tony:** I was going to shows and I was talking to that guy Katz from *Flipside*. Somewhere in the conversation I mentioned I used to be in Thee Undertakers. He says, "Oh really?" Eventually he introduced me to Brian from Grand Theft Audio and he expressed some interest in putting that CD out. It looked like it was gonna happen at one point, and then for some reason he changed his mind. I got disappointed. I had a DAT tape of a mixdown. I think I was drunk one night and all pissed off. I threw it in the trash.

**Tracy:** That's why it took twenty years. [Everyone laughs]

**Tony:** No, no. They still had the regular master. This was just a DAT of that master, so we still had a backup. So maybe a year or two went by, and Brian expressed interest in putting it out again, so I went all over the place looking for that DAT. I didn't remember right away that I'd thrown it away. I looked all over the house for that thing, but couldn't find it. Eventually, he ended up getting the original one-inch master and did what he had to do. It all worked out, which is good because nobody knew who we were for a long time. The review came out in *Maximum Rock'n'roll*. The reviewer said if we had had that CD (*Crucify Me* on GTA, which might be out of print again) out at the time, back in '80 or '81, we would've been just as well known as the Adolescents and all the Orange County bands that were out there, and we probably would be playing some big shows right now.

**Art:** But that's the whole mystique about the band...

**Tracy:** We're like Spinal Tap. [Tracy and Tony laugh]

**Art:** ...the notoriety, the credibility. We weren't put on a pedestal like a lot of the bands were, for that reason. To me, the most mystical and mysterious treasure that East L.A. has is this group, and it's still to be reckoned with. You know George (their current drummer, who also played in Misled, The Thrusters, and Media Blitz, to name a few) yourself and you saw us at La Mano

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Press. That was only four days of practice, and it's only every six months or so we have a gig, you know? But it's still to be reckoned with and it's a unique treasure for the historical music scene of East L.A.

**Jimmy:** I can think of at least two bands had "Death Breath" in their sets: Thee Undertakers and Media Blitz.

**Tracy:** I was riding the bus, and you just see the smoke, like death breath, 'cause you're smelling it.

**Art:** But that was basically the song, the power of the song.

**Tracy:** "Death Breath" was kind of like a punk rock, rock song, 'cause we went off on this part where Tony can just do solos, and punkers were looking at us. Tony's going of on this Edgar Winter [imitates a guitar solo], but it worked. It was like a rave song of punk, I would say. We could keep the kids slamming.

**Tony:** Music-wise, where do you think that came from, the main structure of the song? What were you listening to?

**Tracy:** Nothing. I was listening to nothing. I just saw the bus go off and it just made sense as a fast song. Did you ever ride the bus when you're growing up? That's all we did. We didn't have cars, so we had to ride

the bus everywhere and you see all these weird people and you gotta deal with—the crowds—and you gotta deal with the traffic, so the song made sense, that [imitates the song's main riff], trying to breathe in the air as you're sitting in the bus with all these stinky people. You're sitting at the bus stop and the bus takes off and blows smoke in your face. You smell everything around you.

**Art:** Pollution.

**Jimmy:** The interesting thing is that, like with "National Hero" and with "Death Breath" and stuff like that, you were able to, I guess, poeticize it so that it wasn't obvious so that it had all these other possible meanings. I mean, "Death Breath" could've been about Zyklon-B gas.

**Tracy:** Or napalm or poison gas or whatever.

**Art:** Or farts. [Everyone laughs] Death breath! [choking]

**Tracy:** "Oh, dude, that's a death breath! You laid a good death breath!"

**Jimmy:** So yeah, the thing is there were all these layers. It's interesting because you have this kind of horror/punk mystique thing going, but, at the same time, you've got these songs that are very much rooted in what's going on around you.

**Tracy:** Exactly.

**Jimmy:** Okay, what about "Acne" and "Drugs City"?

**Tracy:** "Acne," Mike Chaidez wrote the lyrics because Mike had a really bad acne problem. He wanted to write a song about acne, which actually worked well because a lot of the kids in the audience had acne. We all had acne. Except for Art. He was a pretty boy.

**Art:** You're crazy. You were the pretty boy.

**Tony:** One day I went to practice in Mike's backyard, and all Tracy's friends were there hanging out. They were singing a song, "Let me take you down, 'cause I'm going to strawberry face, he lives in outer space, and his mom pogos to Blondie..." [everyone laughs]

**Tracy:** Is that how that came up?

**Tony:** Yeah. "What's that about?" "Oh, that's about Mike."

**Tracy:** "Drugs City" was growing up in East L.A. A lot of people you talked to, they'd see the same thing. It's all over the place.

**Art:** "Come on down!"

**Tracy:** It was rampant everywhere. Everyone we'd hang out with. I used to hang out with this guy Robert, who was a skater before there was skating, in like '78, skating around and listening to punk, but everybody had pot.

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**Jimmy:** Some people saw punk rock as a way of transcending and circumventing race and cultural differences, that it kind of subverted the whole Chicano thing. Did that apply to you at all? Did you see it as creating a new identity?

**Art:** If we did, it was being modest.

**Tracy:** Well, we did the Revolutionary Communist Party thing. The Illegals didn't like that because they were into the Brown Power thing, and we were into the People Power thing. We were a Hispanic band, but we weren't just for Hispanic people. We were for everybody. We wanted to get the sound out to everybody, so we had the RCP thing going for a while.

**Jimmy:** How did you guys get involved with the RCP?

**Tracy:** They went to one of our shows. They just happened to like the music. They liked the politics, they liked the lyrics, and they were like, "Would you guys be interested in being part of the RCP?" "Well, what do you mean, 'part of the RCP'?" "Well, we just want you to pass out pamphlets and we'll give you Mao buttons," which was great because when we played the Roxy I had my Mao button on. Jesse (Velo of Los Illegals) had his La Raza button on. He looked at me, I looked at him. He gave me this dirty look and I go, "I guess we don't see eye to eye." He just stormed out of the bathroom. We used to put pamphlets out. I think with the RCP thing, we really shouldn't have gotten involved with it. It wasn't about Chicanoism, it was about the people. RCP was revolution. I liked that. It's about the people. Let's overthrow what we can overthrow.

**Art:** Overthrow what's bad.

**Tracy:** Toward the end of it, they started getting more into, like, "We want you to do rallies..."

**Art:** Do this and do that, and I said no.

**Tracy:** "...and we want you to fly our flags," and we're going, "No. We like your ideas, but we can't be like that."

**Art:** No, we weren't like that.

**Tracy:** We don't want to be in the communist party. We just liked the RCP because it pissed a lot of people off and I think that's the main reason why we did it.

**Art:** They had gigs in Oakland and Frisco for us when we went up there.

**Tracy:** Yeah, that was a disaster.

**Tony:** Black Flag was supposed to play with us.

**Tracy:** And we stayed at their house and the FBI's across the street, watching them. Watching *us*.

**Art:** In a two-story old craftsman house in Oakland. Everyone in the house had fuckin' black berets on.

**Tracy:** How revolutionary is that? The FBI's watching us, following us around. The dude that drove us is a pothead, so he's smoking in the driveway, and I'm like, "Dude, the FBI is probably across the street watching this house." We did a couple of shows in San Francisco.

**Art:** And then they took us to this play they called *May the First*, May Day, remember? Some of the people were part of this drama class. It was a trip, man. It was about revolution, like *Reds*. It was crazy.

**Tracy:** And we dealt with that for a while, because it helped the band a little bit, because all of a sudden, "You guys are fuckin' communists now." No, we're into the revolution-type thing. They wanted us to march with them. No. "Okay, will you at least support us?" "Yeah, but we're not into the demonstrations and getting our asses kicked by the cops."

**Art:** Not only that, but communism doesn't work.

**Tracy:** We'll do it through the music. We'll have political lyrics. We'll have "America's Dream." We'll have "Behind Closed Doors." We had a song, "Recession," 'cause it was during Reagan's time. We were experiencing that where we lived. All of us didn't have jobs. We were barely getting by with money we made from gigs. As time went by, the gigs were getting a little bit better, but you're still not gonna live off it because you're not doing it all the time.

**Art:** Going back to what you said about transcending all this; it was in the moment that we were doing it. We were just being us, and whatever we did, we did it.

**Tracy:** And I think that the whole East L.A. scene was everyone just doing it. It wasn't planned, it just happened. All of a sudden, we pop up, then we met The Brat, then we met the Illegals, and then we found out about the Stains.

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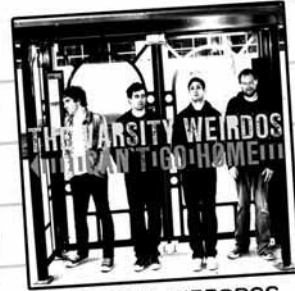
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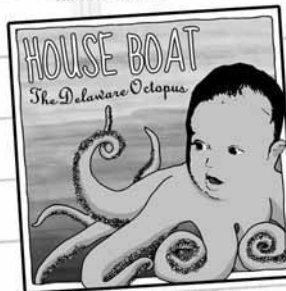
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**Art:** You know what? In any city, in any community, there's drugs, dude. Drugs City could be East L.A....

**Tony:** Originally, it was just "Drugs City, USA." I think Art came up with the idea of adding East L.A. in there.

**Tracy:** We'd throw little things in there, like USA/East L.A. Not just East L.A., but everywhere.

**Art:** I'd say both, USA/East L.A. That song is relevant to a lot of cities everywhere you go. I just saw *American Gangster*, and I go, "Damn. That's crazy." I mean in that little community, and they said the government controlled everything and they're just killing each other. It's all over, dude. It's around your neighborhood, too. Have you seen the history of opium and heroin?

**Jimmy:** Yeah, on the History Channel.

**Art:** Fuckin' Bayer was the one that came out with cough medicine with heroin in it.

**Tracy:** Coca Cola had coke in it.

**Art:** So, you know, it's all over. It's a fun song, too, though.

**Tracy:** But that's another thing with us, too, is we weren't really stupid kids. We actually studied history, and Tony was involved with the choir, That's where in "Halls and Walls" he gets the weird [imitates a spooky guitar riff].

**Art:** That's gospel.

**Tony:** Well, I did that because you had that bass line [imitates the bass line]. I said, "That sounds like that choir thing we do at school." So I added that in that song.

**Tracy:** It's because we listened to that first PIL record. We were starting to get into other things.

**Jimmy:** I think it's interesting that you just said that, too, about being smart kids, because the assumption is usually, number one, you're Chicano kids from East L.A.,

which means you're stupid, and you're punk rockers, which means you're stupid.

**Tracy:** Yeah. But when they see us, they're like, "Oh, they've got something to say, and they can actually play and they're getting in people's faces." We've dealt with audiences with people throwing shit and getting in fights and that was just part of it, you know? But I think that's what made the whole thing interesting, especially Tony rolling on the floor and people are freaking out, like "What the hell's he doing?" He's rolling on the floor with this guitar, still playing. Remember the Montebello Ballroom show?

**Art:** I have a picture of me and Tony and, man, me and him were just wasted.

**Tracy:** There's that picture of you on the floor and you look like you had no shirt on. You're just laying there with your guitar.

**Tony:** I had a copy of that picture and I think I freaked out and threw it in the trash.

**Tracy:** Like he did with the tapes and everything else, [Everyone laughs] so all Thee Undertakers' history is in the trash somewhere.

**Tony:** That was the same day that it seemed like he didn't want to put the CD out, so I think, along with the DAT tape, I threw away the picture, too.

**Jimmy:** There was a period when you were trying to sell Undertakers stuff yourself on cassettes, though, right? I remember seeing an ad for it in *Flipside*.

**Tracy:** Oh, you were bootlegging it? [laughs]

**Tony:** Yeah, for a little while.

**Art:** What were you selling?

**Tony:** Just like a cassette of Undertakers stuff.

**Art:** I have this thing called *Boot Hill*. Our first cassette we did at Panda Bear, that Panda studio. Remember Frank at the bottom, his little trippy studio in the back?

**Tony:** Oh yeah.

**Art:** He didn't mix it right, but I have a CD.

**Tracy:** That was actually our first real recording. We used to do a lot of stuff on reel to reel.

**Jimmy:** This is a different demo from the stuff that got released?

**All:** Yeah.

**Tracy:** Before Panda Bear, we were doing stuff in the living room. This guy would bring a reel to reel. It sounded pretty good. But all the tapes got lost. Unfortunately, a lot of stuff that we did is not there anymore. We just kept recording and recording and we got better and better and we could hear ourselves going, "Okay, this sounds stupid. This doesn't sound right. Go back and fix it." I think doing a lot of recording like that helped before we did the full album.

**Art:** It helped everybody out. We were all critical, man. We're just critical of each other and got on each other's ass all the time. We were criticizing everybody and that's how the band got better.

**Tony:** Mike recorded that last one that's on there. Actually, it didn't come out on the CD, it came out on that *L.A. Muerte 7"*.

**Jimmy:** Yeah, the two studio songs on the one side.

**Tony:** Yeah, "Register to Die" and the other was "Electric Eye." He recorded that over at 7<sup>th</sup> and Central (in Downtown L.A.). We were practicing there. The Stains had a practice place there, and The Weirdos were up there, I think. Quite a few bands were up there practicing.

**Art:** A girl came up to me sniffing glue or something in her sock, just watching us practice. That was a weird place, dude. I was writing a song called "7<sup>th</sup> and Central." How long did you guys stay there?

**Tony:** Another few months.



# MUSIC MAGNETIZES YOU. IT GETS YOU.





# CHEAP

Cheap Girls are a pop punk trio from Lansing, Michigan. Building on the landscape surveyed and mapped by the Smoking Popes, brothers Ian and Ben Graham play with Adam Aymor, adding a backbone to the lightheartedness this genre can normally fall victim to. They sing songs about drinking and, at times, irresponsible partying. Depression and isolation are frequent vibes tossed out in their catalogue.

Their first album, *Find Me a Drink Home*, was released by a Michigan label,. It was met with acclaim and joy from many *Razorcake* readers and was re-issued by Paper & Plastick. In March 2009 I had an odd/drunky conversation with Ian about it.

Me: Hey, thanks for writing *Find Me a Drink Home*. It's a great record.

Ian: Why? Those were horrible times.

INTRODUCTION & INTERVIEW BY **REPLAY DAVE**



DANA CURRAN

# GIRLS

Their new, sophomore album, *My Roaring 20's* is out now from Paper & Plastick. I had the opportunity to share a van with Cheap Girls for a couple weeks on the West Coast in September 2009. Not only were they great musicians and songwriters, but friendly gents to boot!

This interview stems from a bunch of stuff that has been rolling around in my head since we parted ways. The song "Sleeping Weather" on their new album expands on the idea of how expansive credit quickly becomes debt that strangles opportunity, which leads to isolation. Living within financial means is one of my favorite topics, but I bit my tongue and stayed away from that side of their writing. I'll save those questions for when they record an album titled *My Fiscally Responsible 40s*. Crack into a bottle of cheap wine and enjoy *My Roaring 20's*. All that focus on depression doesn't seem to drag them down.

PHOTOS BY **DANA CURRAN, AMBER PRAINITO & REPLAY DAVE** ART JUNK BY **AMY ADOYZIE**

**Ian:** Bass/ Vocals  
**Adam:** Guitar  
**Ben:** Drums

**Dave:** Wait one second. None of you are girls.... You have some explaining to do. Explain the name and then we'll get on to real questions.

**Ben:** I'll let Ian answer this if he feels like it. It was either Cheap Girls or Meryl Streep. I will leave it at that...

**Adam:** ...or Bachelor Party. Which one is more misleading?

**Ian:** No comment.

**Dave:** Stuck for two weeks on a desert island or Greyhound bus with one of these three intoxicants: alcohol, weed, pills. Which do you bring and why?

**Ian:** Weed. I've found it works well for sitting in the same place for a long period of time.

**Ben:** Alcohol. I'm assuming there isn't much available in the food department. So weed may not work out too well... you know, munchies and all. I don't like pills. I love booze.

**Adam:** I'd go with pills, Xanax in particular. It makes two-week stints in one place way more fun. And it seems to have a great affect the next morning as well. If I were on an island, I wouldn't want a hangover every morning.

**Dave:** Do you encourage others to start smoking cigarettes?

**Ben:** Yes.

**Ian:** Not directly—unless I'm drunk, and then I encourage everybody to do all of the stupid things I do as a method of connection.

**Adam:** I've never smoked, but do what you do, I suppose.

**Dave:** Explain how you got sponsored by Taco Bell. While you're at it, what's your menu choice there?

**Ben:** Every year, Taco Bell sponsors one hundred bands, based on touring efforts and junk like that. Currently, I've been pounding the cheesy five-layer burrito.

**Adam:** Someone sent us an email for this contest of sorts. We filled out the info real quick and got some Taco Bell out of it. I like it when there are the Taco Bells that are conjoined with KFC or Pizza Hut. I only like the desserts at Taco Bell.

**Ian:** We answered a few questions on a website and they emailed us a few weeks later saying we were selected. I eat Taco Bell approximately five to ten times every week. Top three items: cheesy bean and rice burrito without fiesta salsa, cheese quesadilla, and potato tacos without lettuce. I would do it again in a heartbeat.

**Dave:** What did you get from Taco Bell out of the deal?

**Ian:** Taco Bell gave us a fair amount of gift certificates—"Bell Bucks"—which we use when we go on tour. Very convenient. They're also treated as cash, so if you don't fulfill the amount on a certificate, you get cash back. They also work at Taco Bell/KFC and Taco Bell/Pizza Hut combination restaurants for either menu.

**Dave:** What, if any, sacrifices were made to be sponsored? Do you have to thank them in your next album?



Do you encourage others to start smoking?  
Not directly— unless I'm drunk  
and then I encourage everyone to do  
stupid things I do as a method of connection.



AMBER PRAINITO

smoking cigarettes?

unk,  
 ge everybody to do all of the  
 as a method of connection.

**Adam:** The beauty of the Taco Bell deal is we don't have to do anything, so no real consequences.

**Ben:** We do nothing. They put a link up on their site for us. I think they have a web banner we can put up if we want or something.

**Ian:** We're not required to thank them, say their name on stage, or put a sticker on our van. However, I would probably do—and maybe have done—any of those things pre-endorsement.

**Dave:** Any other restaurant you'd rather be sponsored by?

**Ian:** Fast food-wise, no. Full-menu, sit down? Olive Garden. Locally? Georgio's Pizza in East Lansing, MI.

**Ben:** Taco Bell is great for a touring band, but In-N-Out would be rad for West Coast tours.

**Adam:** Qdoba and In-N-Out Burger.

**Dave:** Ever get confused for gang members by the L.A.P.D.?

**Ian:** Not personally.

**Adam:** We keep our colors pretty neutral, lots of flannel. But, instead of only buttoning the top button, we button all the others.

**Ian:** Strange night.

**Adam:** Apparently, the strangest night ever. You can never tell the story as good as it was. I was a bit mesmerized by the whole fiasco and was in harm's way until you, Replay, pulled me out. We're playing Party Marty's birthday party soon in the same town. Maybe this time he won't end up sitting down on the sidewalk after the show.

**Ben:** Do you want my whole version of the story? [laughs] It was all Andy Pants with the bandana that did it. (Andy Pants was Grabass's roadie whom we stole from the Soviettes when we toured together in 2005. That night, he had gotten kicked out for sneaking in beers and snuck back in wearing a disguise that featured a black hooded sweatshirt and bandana on his head.)

**Dave:** Yes, I want your version of the story. The readers want to know.

**Adam:** We were playing in Pomona, California with Underground Railroad To Candyland, Grabass Charlestons, That's Incredible, and Madison Bloodbath.

**Adam:** The venue was split into two areas, indoor and outdoor. Outdoor was having the show and indoor was having a birthday party for someone who wasn't as cool as Party Marty.

**Ben:** We played on the patio thing outside. Lots of people outside, lots of other people inside who had no interest in the show.

**Ben:** After we played, Underground Railroad went on. About halfway through their set, I noticed a couple cop cars outside. I casually strolled out to the van just to see what was up and I overhear, "Well, we're taking these two in for fighting out here" and I'm like, "No biggie."

**Adam:** The show was awesome. Near the end of Underground Railroad's set, some helicopters flying very low began shining searchlights on the show. Everyone waved and basically kept watching the show.

**Ben:** A few minutes later, I'm back on the patio watching the show and I notice a helicopter with a spotlight shining down—

not just in the area—but right fucking on the bar. Lighting up the stage. I'm like, "Shit, what's happening?" I kind of worked my way to go back inside the bar and didn't get past the door when I saw fifteen cops grabbing people and a bunch of people were getting dragged out. I no sooner get back to our merch table when I see a gang of fuzz pushing Party Marty through the door, into a table and chairs, take him down, and hit him a few times with the baton. Then twenty other cops charge in and just start pushing and beating innocent people.

So much confusion. We had no idea what was happening. If anyone tried to say, "What are you doing?" or "Stop pushing me. I didn't do anything," you either got hit more, or arrested. I personally kept to the side, and when one of the cops came my way and said "Move... out... now." He pushed me into the PA speaker—after I had just stood there and didn't do anything or say anything. I then said, "Why are you doing this?" Answer: "Everybody out now or you're going to jail." That's a direct quote from someone who I've since been referring to as "Officer Dickface." I said "I'm not leaving. I'm in the band and all of our stuff is here. We didn't do anything wrong." Reply: "It will be here when you get back."

As this is happening, I think it was Will, Andy Pants, and PJ (Grabass Charlestons) perhaps, that were just grabbing all the gear and shoving it out on the sidewalk by the van. I finally got the cop to let me stand by the merch table and pack up, but he said "Don't move from that spot." All in all, I counted about twenty-five police cars and about two dozen or so kids cuffed on the street. What we found out was that some rival gang bullshit had gone on inside the bar while we were all outside enjoying ourselves. Walls got tagged, chairs thrown. Cops came in and just fucking cleared the place, which is what they are probably supposed to do for their own safety. But from our point of view, we literally couldn't see any of this going on, had nothing to do with it, and then you're just being pushed over and beat up by the people who are supposed to be protecting you from that shit.

**Adam:** It was probably the craziest thing I've seen at a show and made for a memorable last night of our tour with Grabass.

**Ben:** Looking back, the cops had the right intentions but several of them highly overreacted and hurt innocent people. Then some kid outside handed me a joint. We got in the van and drank beers while Adam drove us back to where we were staying. The end.

**Adam:** I just buy everything so I can show off my new wallet.

**Dave:** Explain the sticker "Cheap Girls Say Relapse."

**Adam:** Just a play on words that we thought was hilarious.

**Ian:** Nobody really ever gets the joke or reference. I guess it's much more of a reference slash play on words rather than a joke.

**Ben:** That was our first T-shirt. It's just a play on "Frankie Says Relax," but it's about not

giving up on drinking. We're young and we drink a lot. And do some other stuff. Some people find it offensive, and that's cool.

**Dave:** *My Roaring 20's* was once slated to be called *God's Ex-Wife*. Why the switch?

**Ian:** Because we weren't letting Ryan Horky dictate two album titles in a row.

**Adam:** We were going to a show with Ryan and the *God's Ex-Wife* thing came up. Ryan loved the title. But, some time later, the *Roaring 20's* idea came up and we thought it was a little more applicable to our band, I suppose.

**Dave:** If Superchunk, Guided By Voices, and Smoking Popes separately ask you to tour during the same month. All things equal, who do you go with?

**Ian:** Superchunk.

**Ben:** I say we break that month into thirds. Ten shows with each.

**Adam:** This is a tough one, but I'd go with Superchunk. I have yet to see them and I've seen the Popes five times. I only know a handful of GBV songs, which—I know—is blasphemy. But, anyways, Superchunk is my final answer.

**Dave:** Adam, do you use your love for metal in riff writing without telling the other two guys?

**Adam:** I sneak little bits in there, I suppose. I think in my tone is where it comes through. I like that old Black Sabbath tone with lots of low end and distortion but still clear enough to hear everything that's being played.

**Dave:** Is there any residue of Holt High School in your current songwriting?

**Ben:** Doubt it. Adam went to Grand Ledge.

**Adam:** I went to Grand Ledge with Paul Baribeau (an indie-folk artist).

**Ben:** Ian and I went to Holt. Nothing really stands out as far as memories from high school that would end up in a song. Ian used to do drugs and booze in high school... so, I guess, a little.

**Ian:** I'd say indirectly. I was enrolled in Holt public schools for my whole K-12 career. So, yeah, by default.

**Dave:** Abe Froman, Small Brown Bike, Cheap Girls. All bands from Lansing, Michigan that involve siblings. What's the deal with that?

**Ben:** Michigan rules. But no one has friends. We're forced into spending family time. None of us have friends, so we start bands with siblings. Or, maybe it's because we're snowed in all the time, hanging out in our parents' basements and junk.

**Adam:** I don't know, but seeing all these siblings play in bands over the years has made me envious. Plus, at Christmas dinner when your family is giving you shit about being in a band and all that, you have one more person to back you up.

**Ian:** Coincidence? I really couldn't tell you. I do know that the siblings in all of those bands started playing together from a very young age. And, personally, Ben and I played together because we were the only kids we knew who liked what we liked at a young age and had instruments to mess around with.

**Dave:** What year did your dad dress as Gene Simmons for Halloween? Were you old enough to appreciate that?

**Ben:** I believe that was before Ian and I were born. I'm gonna guess '77 or '78. However, we were introduced to KISS at a very young age and have appreciated them for a long time now. I think it was '96 or '97 when they had their big world tour and we went to the Detroit stop with our parents.

**Ian:** 1996 at the Palace of Auburn Hills, where the Pistons played, and it was fucking cool.

**Ben:** Good times. Oh, and my dad used to blow fire, too.

**Ian:** We also covered "Strutter." Once that I remember, and maybe two or three other times that I don't remember.... Just called Dad. 1976. I wasn't born until 1986.

**Dave:** Would your dad have fit in in *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*? That was from 1986. Or, had he settled down by then?

**Ben:** My dad, probably not. He had sort of settled down, in the sense that I was two and Ian was born in '86, but he still smoked pot and listened to KISS, Dead Boys, Plasmatics, Sex Pistols, Rush, stuff like that. Not much of a metal guy.

**Ian:** I think he had his hands full by that point. He's still very much a music fan and he always has been but, obviously, some things begin to take up a lot of the free time.

**Adam:** [laughs] Our dads should hang out.

**Dave:** What's your closest personal connection to a natural disaster?

**Adam:** We are from Michigan, so every now and then there is a blizzard. We recorded our first LP up in northern Michigan in a cabin near a little town that I do not recall the name of. We went off the road once getting up there and, luckily, got pulled out by a dude that happened to be passing by. I think we even thanked him in the liner notes of the record. But Ben and I also went off the road again a couple days later and it was quite intense. We spun all the way around, went down into the median, yelled at each other, somehow kept the van moving through the deep snow, and got back up on the road just before running into the upcoming freeway overpass. A state policeman was driving next to us for the whole thing and didn't seem to really give a shit about it. I also slept through a tornado once.

**Ben:** There was a very, very minor earthquake in mid-Michigan, '97-ish. One of my mom's little knick knacks fell off a shelf. The whole thing felt like someone slammed a door hard enough to knock something very small off the wall. That's about it. [laughs]

**Ian:** Mainly just snow-related inconveniences. Far from a "natural disaster."

**Dave:** What's the worst job you've had and why?

**Adam:** Every job has been the worst.

**Ben:** None, really. I like working. I don't like working non-stop around my tour schedule, though. But I've never had a job that I couldn't stand. I've never quit or been fired.

**Ian:** I've had upwards of twenty jobs, I think. I've really only ever had an extreme problem with the ones dealing with food. I've been a busboy, dishwasher, and sandwich maker and it's just not my area whatsoever.



REPLAY DAVE

## None of us have friends, so we start bands with siblings.

Or, maybe it's because we're snowed in all the time,  
hanging out in our parents' basements and junk.

NONE

**Dave:** How did the U.S. auto industry affect you growing up? Have you ever worked in the factories?

**Ben:** Well, my dad has many relatives who worked for GM. Everyone here has a relative or friend's dad who worked there. We're the capitol city, but we were also one of the biggest car cities in Michigan—Flint and Detroit and us. Detroit isn't much of anything anymore, and all of the GM plants right by my house got torn down about a year ago. The economy is shit all over the place, but here it's pretty bad. Seems to be getting better a bit. I've been in the factories a few times but never worked there. I think our dads are all retired.

**Ian:** All of our parents were or are employed by General Motors, save for my mother, who is employed by the Michigan government. When Ben and I were growing up, our father had steady employment, a lot of overtime opportunities, and a well-paying job. He retired before the whole situation went to absolute shit. I know that he has experienced some unfortunate things in the last couple years dealing with insurance and his retirement package, but I'm not really sure to what extent. It really is kind of a handed-down job. It's pretty easy to get a job there if you have a relative who has a history, and if you can

pass the hair test. It never really had any appeal to me whatsoever.

**Adam:** Both of my parents worked or still work at General Motors. I worked over fifty hours a week using a ninety-pound torque wrench installing various parts on cars. It was exhausting and I met some crazy people. I ended up quitting for our first tour.

**Dave:** Is the desolation described in Michael Moore's *Roger and Me* accurate?

**Ben:** Never saw the film.

**Ian:** Not really a Michael Moore fan.

**Adam:** I would say so. Obviously, it's worse in places like Flint and Detroit. You don't seem to notice it until it's put into film and made obvious.

**Dave:** Is there really a rivalry between the upper and lower peninsula?

**Ian:** Not to my knowledge. I love the upper peninsula. It's absolutely gorgeous up there.

**Ben:** Not that I know of. No one lives up there.

**Adam:** Yeah, there is. It's like a mini civil war, but really boring. We can both agree that Mackinac Island is awesome though.

**Dave:** How many of Michigan's lakes have you been to?

**Ben:** Well, I think I've been to all of the Great Lakes and probably a dozen or so regular lakes... shit-ton of water here.

**Adam:** Of the five Great Lakes, I've been to four, but only swam in two. I hate getting wet.

**Ian:** Are you referring directly to the Great Lakes or all of the lakes within Michigan?

**Dave:** Any of the lakes that Michigan claims in its borders. I'd include the Great Lakes as well.

**Ian:** Great Lakes—all but Lake Ontario, which does not border any portion of Michigan. As for lakes within Michigan: too many to count. A few dozen? There are just so many and a large percentage of them are kind of "no-name."

**Dave:** Ever go ice fishing? What's that like?

**Ian:** Never gone ice fishing.

**Adam:** I went once. It's fucking dangerous. Everybody gets drunk on ice that is sometimes thick enough not to worry about.

**Ben:** No. I guess it's around. I never really hear anyone talking about ice fishing. I guess people do up here, but I never notice. I always hear of people falling through the ice, though. They were probably all ice fishing.

**Dave:** Debate using fake coupons for free items versus straight shoplifting.

**Ian:** Paper trails are slower than video recorders. Fake coupons.

**Ben:** The coups get you a head start. You probably shouldn't print anything about that. My source will be upset.

A black and white photograph of a man performing on stage. He is wearing a dark short-sleeved button-down shirt and light-colored trousers. He is playing a light-colored electric guitar with a dark pickguard and a checkered strap. He is singing into a microphone on a stand. The background is dark with bright stage lights creating a bokeh effect. Large white speakers are visible in the foreground. The word "BILLY" is overlaid in large white capital letters across the middle of the image.

# BILLY

HENRY TAKSIER

**D**uring one summer of high school, I remember buying two records. The Clash *Sandinista* and Billy Bragg's *Between the Wars* EP. Those two stand out as part of my initial search for meaningful, political punk rock. I was already in love with the Clash, but my only reference point for Bragg was the line in the Rancid song "War's End," where Sammy's parents "smash his Billy Bragg records. Didn't want him to hear that Communist lecture." I knew nothing else about him and bought the record on a whim.

That record is just Bragg and his guitar. In four songs, he sings of his discontent with the British government, a misleading mainstream media, the story of a British communal agrarian movement called the Diggers, and his stance against even the mere concept of war. What immediately struck me then, and what still rings true of his music today, is that these were not just songs telling the government to fuck off, but songs of compassion and his faith in humanity to do the right thing. It

wasn't preachy, but beautiful and hopeful; something I was drawn to in contemporary bands I was listening to at that point, like Strike Anywhere, Propagandhi, and Against Me!

But here was this one man, and one guitar, creating the most powerful, political music that was undoubtedly the embodiment of what I knew to be "punk." Coming from a folk songwriter tradition, Bragg saw the passion of the Clash during their Rock Against Racism tour and ran with it. My mind completely blown, I went on to track down *Back to Basics* and *Talking with the Taxman About Poetry*, also solo records, where he mixes personal and political: his heartbreak over women along with the failures of the British government. I was able to see him perform for the first time from the second row at the Tell Us The Truth tour in 2003 and it was possibly the most inspiring concert I've ever been to. Two months later, never having been in a band and with no prospect of one, I bought a Fender Telecaster like Billy's.

As if his inspiring music weren't

enough, Bragg is a staunch activist, speaking at rallies, strikes, and other events, urging the audience to help and get involved. He has launched websites to encourage British voters to both demand reform and unseat Conservative elected officials. In 2007 he started Jail Guitar Doors, which donates musical instruments to prisoners in an effort towards rehabilitation. Most recently, after the Royal Bank of Scotland was allowed to give out bonuses to its bankers, Bragg is refusing to pay his taxes in protest. He's an active participant in the causes he sings about and doesn't wait for the cause or a leader to tell him how to do that. If you want to talk about DIY, this is it.

This March, the Harvest of Hope Festival brought Billy Bragg across the Atlantic to play a benefit concert to aid migrant farm workers. On a rainy day in St. Augustine, Florida, I had the chance to speak with the man whose music I consider to be the best intersection of folk and punk; of political and personal. For him, Razorcake's motto of "We Do Our Part" could not ring more true.

# BRAGG

**Interview by Lauren Measure and Replay Dave**

**Introduction and Layout by Lauren Measure // Photos by Lily Richeson and Henry Taksier**



**Lauren:** In your career as a songwriter, how have your objectives or approach changed? Has that changed your definition of affecting political change?

**Billy:** Well, I think as I've got older I've come to understand more that you can't change the world by singing about it. It's a lovely idea. And I, as much as anybody else, was seduced by it when I was a Clash fan. The Clash were gonna change the world by singing loud, fast songs. Punk was gonna change the world by patting its hair and spitting in people's faces. When it came my time to actually stand up here and try and actually affect change, my experience has been that the only people in this arrangement who can actually change the world are the audience, not the person up on stage. So, it's your duty as someone

who wants to affect change to reflect that back onto the audience, and I've always tried to do that. And, recently, I've become more specific about it. I have a track on my last album called "I Keep Faith," which, when I play tomorrow night, I will lay a very heavy trip on the audience about my faith in their ability to change the world. Nobody's going to change the world by buying Billy Bragg records. Don't be stupid. I'm just one guy, but there are many of you. You go away and do the small things that you do, and I do what I do, and together it affects change.

**Lauren:** For folks reading this who want to help, what types of things do you usually talk about having the audience do?

**Billy:** It changes all the time. When I come to a country or town, I try to grab the local

newspaper. When I've been there for a few days, I'll have seen some TV and I'll have an idea of where things are going. I think the big thing I'll be talking about tomorrow will be the ideals of this festival, the Harvest of Hope Festival, and support for migrant workers. I think that's going to be the important thing for people to understand that it's not just a local or national thing, but an international thing. And that's why I'm here. I'm also going to talk about our expectations of President Obama and, while it may be disappointing that he hasn't changed the world like some sort of wizard, these things take time.

**Lauren:** Well, from your perspective, how do you think the Obama administration is doing? You know, clearly not changing things instantly.



LILY RICHESON

# THE ONLY PEOPLE IN THIS ARRANGEMENT WHO CAN ACTUALLY CHANGE THE WORLD ARE THE AUDIENCE, NOT THE PERSON UP ON STAGE.

**Billy:** The difference between America and the world because of the position of your country and the world is something that affects all of us. Before Obama was elected, we were in a very dark place. Now, although all the things that we wanted to happen haven't quite happened, we live in a world of possibilities, and all of those possibilities will remain in play as long as Obama is in the White House. So it's our duty as people who want to realize those possibilities not to be pissed off because we haven't gotten everything on our wish list straight away, but to push as hard as we can while he's there; to use every day that he's in office to try and encourage Democrats to do the right thing: To act on the war, to act on healthcare, to act on women's rights, abortion issues, and that

kind of thing. To not become cynical and sit on the sidelines and say, "He's the same as George Bush," because he's not the same as George Bush. 'Cause we have a similar thing with Tony Blair, you know? The expectations were so high when Blair got elected and there were loads of disappointments—most obviously the war in Iraq—but on the other side, we have peace in Northern Ireland. I mean, I never thought it was going to happen in my lifetime, seriously. I really think my kids would still be living with that.

**Lauren:** That's a wonderful change.

**Billy:** Yeah, it's an incredible change! Just last week, the final piece of the Good Friday Agreement which was made in the late '90s came into place when policing powers were given back to the assembly in Northern Ireland and relinquished their control from London, which is the ultimate last little block. The big stumbling block of the whole process was who was in charge of the police, 'cause, obviously, the police had previously been sectarian. They had been a Protestant sectarian force, and they overcame that last week. It's amazing, it's incredibly historic. Now, that may not have happened without Tony Blair's ability to sit down and talk to those kind of people. My point is that some of the things that we wanted, happened. Some things didn't. But would I swap? Would I go back? No. Have I become a cynic? No, I'm not. I still am someone who believes that the world broadly is made up of people with good intentions, rather than evil people, with occasional little flashes of good intentions. I think that's the trouble with cynics: they think everybody's evil. I tend to think that everyone is capable—given the opportunity, given the choice—to do the responsible thing.

**Lauren:** People have the opportunity, to voice their opinions and actually make...

**Billy:** I, on top of that, have the opportunity to travel around and talk to people who are doing that.

**Lauren:** Exactly.

**Billy:** It's possible to see activists, so I know that the audience can change the world. But

it's tough. I mean, we did some shows in San Francisco last year. And there were young people there who mostly never—who weren't around the last time Bush got elected—who were really broken up that Obama hadn't delivered everything in the first year. And I'm just like, "Listen, guy, getting him elected was just getting him to the match. Getting to the game, getting to the pitch." Now he's got the ball. Now it's *really* tough, 'cause he's got the ball and all the Republican attack teams are jumping on him—to use an American football metaphor, which I'm not really good at, 'cause I don't know the name of the players. But, you know, he's the... what's the name of the guy who has the ball before he throws it? The pitcher? No...

**Lauren:** The quarterback

**Billy:** Thank you, the quarterback. The pitcher, that's baseball. [laughs] Shit, I'm sorry. This metaphor has really gone wrong. But, yeah, he's the quarterback and the defense are on him. So, it's not easy now. It's not easy. He's got to get his guy in the end zone. He's got to...

**Lauren:** He still needs our support.

**Billy:** Yeah, he still needs our support and the toe of our boot. 'Cause the alternative is we switch off. And the Republicans rely on that. They rely on us being cynical. They play on our cynicism. That's what Glenn Beck is all about: people's cynicism and prodding people to be cynical and think the worst about their country, their fellow citizens, and the world. The world isn't like that. Glenn Beck is doing one thing and one thing alone. Selling advertising. Never forget that. His only interest.

**Lauren:** It's playing on people's fear.

**Billy:** Yeah, that's what populists always do.

**Lauren:** You were talking about traveling around and being able to be a musician who can also say these things. Do you think that the response from things like the progressive music community has been sufficient recently? Do you think that other people have been doing enough?



LILY RICHESON

**Billy:** Well, I'd always like to see a bit more on somebody who believes... If you only use the platform that you get to sell records, you might as well be on *America's Got Talent*. If you don't use it to say something other than "I'm great, you're shit. Do you like my socks?"—which is what most of Oasis' records were saying—then you're not really doing it. But that's just how I feel. I don't judge people by their content. If they don't do it, they don't do it. It's as simple as that. But I'd like to see more. I'd always like to see more. It's good to be on a bill with some of the bands like Anti-Flag. I know they're from the old school.

**Lauren:** I've always been drawn to the intersection of personal and political for you. How do you think that has come into play in terms of how people react to your songs or how people feel connected to that? Is that a conscious decision?

**Billy:** It's very conscious. "I Keep Faith"—the song I was talking about earlier—which is a song that when I announce it, I will say, "It's a song about my faith in the audience

to change the world." The first time my son saw me performing it, he said to his mother, "Mom, why doesn't Dad tell the audience this song is about you?" and my missus said to him, "Well, it is about me. You know that and Dad knows that, but it's also about what Dad's saying it's about." So to write songs that can be both personal and political. If you want to take "I Keep Faith," it could just be a love song. It's the way you pitch it. It's the way you put it out there. That's the effect. I do a lot of work in prisons. I own a thing called Jail Guitar Doors, which buys musical instruments and gives them to people in prisons who are using guitars and using musical instruments to facilitate rehabilitation. And when I go to give them the guitars, I lay on quite a strong vibe on the inmates. Say, "You know, the people who bought these guitars believe that you can be rehabilitated and come back to society. When you take these guitars, it's not a gift. It's a challenge. It's based on their faith in your ability to be redeemed." And then I play "I Keep Faith." It's all about how you pitch these things. They're not sledgehammers. They're things that you invite the audience to listen to and think of in their own situation.

**Lauren:** It's not always about knocking them over the head with something.

**Billy:** Well I *do* have those songs that knock people over the head.

**Lauren:** Oh yeah, of course

**Billy:** And I enjoy writing those songs. I have this song called "The Last Flight to Abu Dhabi," which is about a banker leaving Britain because he doesn't want to pay the tax on his bonus. And everyone has a real laugh at that, but it doesn't make you cry like "I Keep Faith" does. People come up to me after a gig and say, "Oh that song made me cry," and I say, "That's my *job*, mate. That's my job. To get some emotion."

**Lauren:** And that's wonderful.

**Billy:** I think that because I've never just been a polemicist. I've always been a polemicist and a lover, man. You balance those two things out, because what is socialism if not organized compassion? If you don't care about individual people who are close to you, you don't really really care about them. I think you care for everybody. It doesn't seem to me to be any different. Compassion is just socialism of the heart rather than ideological socialism of the head.

**Lauren:** Speaking to people caring about their communities. If you care about the people around you, what do you do? What do you do to make sure they're okay? On the same topic, you first hit my radar as someone who some parents probably wouldn't want their kids listening to for the views you put out there.

**Billy:** 'Cause I'm a commie.

**Lauren:** As a parent, is there anyone who you might be disappointed that your child was listening to?

**Billy:** Yeah, yeah. I wouldn't be very happy if he was listening to gangster rap and bling and all that materialistic macho shit. I wouldn't be happy about him listening to that. And sometimes he does come back—one of the weird things about... I don't know if you've got kids at all?

**Lauren:** [laughs] No.

**Billy:** One of the weird things about music now is that because it's been going on for so long; kids these days see old music in two dimensions. They don't see the time thing. Like, classical music. What's the difference in time between Mozart and Beethoven? I don't know. But I don't think that they were contemporaries or whatever. You just see it as classical music. That's how kids see rock music now. He comes home from school and says something to me like, "Have you heard of a band called Foghat, Dad?" and I say "No."

**Lauren:** [laughs]

**Billy:** He says, "Oh, have you heard, they have a song called..." I say, "No, I haven't heard of that."

**Lauren:** [laughs] You just avoid.

**Billy:** Yeah. He wrote a song the other day called "Unfortunate Son," which was an inversion of "Fortunate Son" by Creedence Clearwater Revival. I was like, *whoah*, this is *really* wacky. And another time we were having a conversation about "Desolation Row" by Bob Dylan. I was playing it and he knew more of the words than I did. That really freaked me out, like the baton had been passed. I said to the missus, "The boy is coming along." He comes into my room to talk to me ostensibly and while he's talking to me, without breaking eye contact, will pick up my guitar and start playing "Ziggy Stardust." He doesn't realize that inside I'm like [puts his hands on his head] "How does he *do* this?!"

**Lauren:** You're happy.

**Billy:** Yeah, I'm scared of him. I'm not happy. I'm scared 'cause he's better than me.

**Lauren:** Have you heard Discount's CD that's all covers of your songs called *Love, Billy*?

**Billy:** Yes, of course! I've heard that CD. I love it.

**Lauren:** That's great. So you know, they're covering your songs that are previously recorded. Is there anyone you could see working with your music or your lyrics in the way that you worked with Woody Guthrie's?

**Billy:** I think so, yeah. I think it's not that hard, if you've got a bit of intuitive sense for what I write. I got license from Woody's daughter to do whatever we liked, which

# WHAT IS SOCIALISM IF NOT ORGANIZED COMPASSION?



LILY RICHESON

was sort of liberating. She didn't want us to make the record sound like a Woody Guthrie record. She wanted to make it sound like a Billy Bragg and Wilco record. I would love for people to take my songs and do whatever they love. I mean the biggest hit I ever had was Kristy McCall playing "New England." It didn't sound like a Billy Bragg song at all. It was a huge pop song. And people loved it. The leader of the Conservative Party, David Cameron, it's one of his favorite songs: Kristy's version. I'm not sure how I feel about that.

**Lauren:** I heard that you are friends with the local folklorist and historian Stetson Kennedy. (Kennedy was also a human rights activist, is an accomplished author, and was instrumental in uncovering much about the Ku Klux Klan in the 1940s and '50s.)

**Billy:** I'm not friends with him, but I know him. I've met him a couple of times. Because Woody wrote the song about him, which I'll probably play tomorrow night. He only lives up the road, doesn't he?

**Lauren:** So I was wondering if there was any added interest for you being in Florida.

**Billy:** Of course! It's always interesting to be in a part of America I've never been to before, 'cause I've been to so many places. Coming to this part of the world, I was led to believe it was sunny. This is just shit. It's like Glastonbury out there. Yeah, Stetson is still around. I met him, actually, at his ninetieth birthday party. We had breakfast together. How amazing is that?

**Lauren:** Yeah, that must be great.

**Billy:** It was lovely to meet him.

**Dave:** He just dedicated his personal library to the Civic Media Center in Gainesville.

**Billy:** Did he? What a great guy. Well, maybe we can take some pictures? Talk some more about American football? It's one of the great oxymorons, isn't it? You know what an oxymoron is? Two words you usually don't see together. American. Football.

**Dave:** Do you ever think it's kind of weird that American sports decided that they are the world champions without inviting any other countries?

**Billy:** Well, the World Series does have two places in Canada, doesn't it?

**Dave:** Yeah, the Toronto Blue Jays and the...

**Billy:** Montreal? That is most Americans' view of the world though, isn't it? The U.S. and Canada and that's it.

**Dave:** On behalf of Americans, I apologize.

**Billy:** No, you don't have to apologize. Please don't apologize. 'Cause some of the things that my country has done... France just straight burned down St. Augustine in the sixteenth century, you know, what the fuck? That's just what we did in those days.

**Dave:** That fort was the first European settlement.

**Billy:** They would've burned down Gainesville as well had there been anything there, but it wasn't worth the march. There was nothing there to burn. You know what pirates are like, English pirates; they'll burn anything.

# DUDE



# JAMS

Interview by CHRIS MASON

Photos by TODD TAYLOR and DANNY BENGSTON

Layout by KEITH ROSSON





# One of the things that definitely drew me into the DIY punk scene

in my earlier years was that it seemed like such a small world where there was little separation between band and fan. While it may sound cheesy, I can't think of many better examples of this idea actualized than when thinking about the short history of Dude Jams. By my count, in its two-year existence, the band has featured members from at least six states and more than twenty active bands. Hell, even I've played in the band a few times. It's only constant member, Brandon, started the band with no real aspirations past recording some songs in his spare bedroom for himself and maybe some of his friends. With the help of those same friends, Dude Jams has become a "real" band that plays "real" shows and releases "real" records.

Dude Jams is spiteful, three-chord pop punk played by thirty-somethings who, in many ways, are still stuck in 1994. And I mean no disrespect by that. The Lookout! Records releases from that time period changed my life and still manage to find heavy rotation on my turntable. But these days, it's rare and to hear a band like Dude Jams that's not afraid to wear their influences on their sleeves still manages to keep me interested and excited.

I asked Brandon to sit down for this interview on a Friday night, and he did so with the stipulation that Dude Jams' current guitar player, Joe, also sit in... and that I bring the alcohol. The interview was conducted on Joe and Brandon's front porch where we've spent countless hours drinking and talking shit. It wasn't all that much different than any other night, aside from the tape recorder that sat between us.

**Chris:** Dude Jams just started out as a recording project that you played all the instruments in, right?

**Brandon:** Yeah. I started Dude Jams in late 2006 when I was bored in San Bernardino. I had amps, drums, a PA, and a four-track. I would just write songs, record them, and listen to them at home. Then I put them on the almighty MySpace and fucking Tom (Myspace founder) ruined everything.

**Chris:** How did Dude Jams become a real band?

**Brandon:** You and J Wang (from Dan Padilla) told me that I should put a song on a record and play some shows. That's that, man. I was just trying to be a hermit.

**Chris:** We kind of drew you out of your cave.

**Brandon:** Yeah, I was totally in a cave at that point.

**Joe:** So was Chris in the first line-up of Dude Jams?

**Chris:** I played drums at Awesome Fest. I think it was the first Dude Jams show, ever. It was Brandon, Andy (from Turkish Techno), me, and then J Wang said, "Hey, let me play guitar." He learned...

**Brandon:** All the songs in the parking lot of Worthington's right before the show. And Chris brought it on drums, dude. [laughs]

**Chris:** Are you being sarcastic, Brandon?

**Brandon:** Ripper!

**Chris:** So, why is it that every time I've asked you if I could play drums since, you've always said no?

**Brandon:** I found Arnie (from Shred Savage), dude. You're a guitar player.

**Chris:** Before that first show, you would send me texts that arrived in four different messages because they were so long.

**Brandon:** I had a Razor phone at the time. I was cutting edge.

**Chris:** We'd never actually met, and you'd

ask me things like, "Can you really play drums or are you just fucking with me?" I was fucking with you.

**Brandon:** You told me you had been playing drums for eight years.

**Chris:** I neglected to tell you that in those eight years I had only played drums maybe twice.

**Brandon:** Chelsea (from Hairdos On Fire) told me that before you came out to California for that show, you'd beat around on the drums every once in a while at band practice and say, "I've got to practice, man. I'm going to play drums in Dude Jams."

**Chris:** Since Dude Jams has been a band, you've had a revolving cast of members. Is that intentional?

**Brandon:** No, it's not intentional. It's just that it is easier to find people who don't have real jobs to get in the van and go on tour.

**Chris:** I imagine there are pros and cons of doing it that way.

**Brandon:** The cons would be you continuously have to keep teaching the same fucking song over and over with different people. Some people learn shit fast, but some others don't.

**Chris:** You don't have to name names, but have there been situations where you end up playing with someone and you think, "Oh my god. This person is awful."?

**Brandon:** [laughs] Totally. We're not naming names?

**Chris:** I was just wondering if that was a con.

**Brandon:** No, that's a pro, man. It lets you know who your friends are.

**Chris:** I imagine it's like when you think you know someone, but then you move in with them.

**Brandon:** Totally [stares down Joe and laughs] (Joe and Brandon are roommates). You have to put that in parenthesis: "Death stare to Joe."

**Joe:** Are you all right, Brandon?

**Chris:** So what are the good things about the revolving cast of members?

**Brandon:** Just people's schedules. It's easy to ask Arnie, who's unattached, "Hey, do you want to go on tour for two months?" He's never like, "I have to see if I can get off of work." Yeah, but that's probably about it. The rest is a headache.

**Chris:** Does it make things stressful?

**Brandon:** Yeah.

**Chris:** Like booking tours when you don't know who is going to play bass?

**Brandon:** I work that out beforehand. Why would I be like, "I want to book this tour, but I don't know who's going to play what"?

**Chris:** Well, you started booking the most recent tour without knowing who was going to play bass.

**Brandon:** Yeah, I guess I did.

**Joe:** Well, bass players aren't important.

**Brandon:** Bass players grow on trees, dude.

**Chris:** So what happened with the band after Awesome Fest?

**Brandon:** In 2008, I left California to come to Las Cruces. We toured to Fest and back with Shang-A-Lang and God Equals Genocide. Then I left Las Cruces and spent time in Kentucky, Florida, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Tennessee. I had some friends in Lexington who have a recording studio, so I recorded some stuff there. I went back to Florida and did a tour that turned into a huge disaster. I've been in Las Cruces for the last eight months.

**Chris:** You've lived in Las Cruces I think longer than...

**Brandon:** Anywhere in the last two years.

**Chris:** So, what's with all the moving?

**Brandon:** I don't know, man.

**Chris:** Joe thinks it's your Aquarius nature.

**Joe:** Yeah, you're Zodiac sign tells everything.



this and previous: TODD TAYLOR

# "JUST TO CLEAR UP ANY CONFUSION, I HAVE A VERY HIGH OPINION OF MYSELF."

**Brandon:** What does that mean?

**Joe:** He's an Aquarius so he's a free spirit. He can't be in one place for very long.

**Brandon:** I was raised by hippies, dude.

**Joe:** That'll do it.

**Chris:** Are you getting antsy here?

**Brandon:** I totally am. I've been here a long time. It seems like I spent as much time in Florida, but I was just in Tampa on and off.

**Chris:** A lot of people think you're from Florida.

**Brandon:** [laughs]

**Joe:** Do you wish you were?

**Brandon:** No. Too many mosquitoes, too much humidity, and I'd have cirrhosis if I lived there.

**Chris:** Do you ever see yourself settling down?

**Brandon:** I probably will settle down somewhere someday, but it'll probably be just because I'm getting old, fat, and poor. I'll get an efficiency apartment somewhere, just

crawl back into my hole, and watch reality TV shows like *Man vs. Food*.

**Joe:** And *L.A. Ink*.

**Chris:** So, Brandon, you have some celebrity crushes.

**Brandon:** No, I don't. Who told you that? Chelsea? Did she say I love Kat Von D (from *L.A. Ink*)?

**Chris:** Yeah. Tell me about her.

**Brandon:** Well, she's from Colton, CA. [laughs]. I think my ex-girlfriend's best friend went to high school with her, and back then they called her Kathy Lashes. Now she's Kat Von D. I don't have a crush on her, though. I just watch *L.A. Ink* a lot.

**Chris:** But you talk about her a lot.

**Brandon:** It's like soap operas, dude. Everyone's got their stories.

**Chris:** Joe, are you actually in Dude Jams

**Joe:** At the moment, yeah.

**Brandon:** Like I said, there is a bass player

farm. They grow on trees. He probably won't be tomorrow.

**Chris:** Joe, when we recently tried to start another band with Brandon, I said I wanted it to sound kind of like a dumb Ramones. I think your reaction was something like, "What's the difference between that and what Brandon is already doing in Dude Jams?"

**Joe:** [laughs] Was that a question?

**Chris:** Do you think Brandon writes stupid Ramones songs?

**Brandon:** Now he's just talking shit. He's just letting some things out that you've said behind my back, but it's totally accurate.

**Joe:** Dude Jams doesn't sound like the Ramones to me, but all the songs do have three chords. I thought when we were doing our new band we were going to try to rip off the Mean Jeans as much as possible.

**Chris:** That didn't really work out, did it?

**Joe:** We're not very good at copying people.

# "I'M A FREE SPIRIT. I DON'T HAVE TIME TO GET LOCKED DOWN IN A CONVERSATION."

**Chris:** Brandon, do you think you're as big a piece of shit as your lyrics let on?

**Brandon:** I don't have any lyrics that say I'm a piece of shit.

**Joe:** Wow! [laughs]

**Brandon:** What are you trying to say?

**Chris:** Yeah, you do.

**Brandon:** Do you have any quotes? Did you do your research?

**Chris:** How about "Dumb Fuck"?

**Brandon:** That's not about me. Just to clear up any confusion, I have a very high opinion of myself. [laughs]

**Chris:** But I do have a theory that you think people who like your band are dumb.

**Brandon:** I don't think they're dumb. I think it's weird. I mean, like I said, it's a band I started in the extra room in our house on a four-track. No offense, but it's like, "Wow, do you really want to put a record out?" I don't get it.

**Chris:** Do you think people who put out your records are wasting their time?

**Brandon:** Yeah. I mean, no. I can't say that! No, they're not wasting their time. Put out more! I'm poor.

**Chris:** You have been really hesitant about doing a record that isn't a split release, though.

**Brandon:** I just think it gets repetitive. The songs are three chords. Sometimes repetitive is good, but we're no Mean Jeans.

**Chris:** You once overheard someone say something pretty funny at one of your shows.

**Brandon:** Oh yeah. We were in Tucson, about three songs in, and a few of our friends overheard someone saying "I get it already." So that's probably a perfect answer to why I prefer splits.

**Chris:** I get it already. Flip it over, listen to something new.

**Brandon:** Exactly. It's been done.

**Chris:** So are you insecure about the band?

**Brandon:** No. I just don't think it's more than what it is. It's a hobby. I'm not going to take it personally if someone's like, "I get it," 'cause I get it, too.

**Chris:** Do you take this seriously?

**Brandon:** Yeah, sure. I mean, it's better than having a real job all year round.

**Chris:** Do you plan your jobs around the band?

**Brandon:** Yeah, I just look for shitty jobs to make enough to go on tour: telemarketing, making pizzas, washing dishes.

**Joe:** Hey, what happened with your last dishwashing job?

**Brandon:** Just the man bringing me down.

**Joe:** You got a pink slip.

**Brandon:** I got laid off from washing dishes.

**Chris:** That's either a true sign that the economy is totally fucked or you are really bad at washing dishes.

**Brandon:** Well, maybe they were bullshitting, but I was told that I was doing an awesome job. They liked the fact that I never talked. I just listened to my headphones and did my job.

**Chris:** But they actually couldn't pay you.

**Brandon:** Yeah. Even before I got laid off, they never had enough money in their business account to pay me.

**Chris:** What do you think they were doing with all the money?

**Brandon:** Oh, we all know what they were doing with the money: internet poker and cocaine.

**Chris:** Sounds like an awesome job.

**Brandon:** Sadly, I didn't partake.

**Chris:** Probably because you didn't talk.

**Brandon:** I'm socially awkward, especially when I'm stoned.

**Joe:** Maybe you're just introverted.

**Brandon:** Maybe. I'm an Aquarius. I'm a free spirit. I don't have time to get locked down in a conversation.

**Chris:** You're always thinking about where to go next.

**Brandon:** I'm always two steps ahead. It's just that nobody knows it yet. Actually, I'm more like five steps behind.

**Joe:** Yeah, like that spaced-out thing where you stare at the wall.

**Chris:** Let's talk about that. Joe, do you want to pose this question?

**Joe:** If you had to work at three in the afternoon, but before work you had to take a shower, drink coffee, and drop something off at the post office, what time would you have to get up to accomplish all three things?

**Brandon:** About nine o'clock.

**Joe:** And would any of those things get done?

**Brandon:** I'd probably drink coffee and take a shower, but I'd go to the post office the next day. [laughs]

**Chris:** I think you were born to live in Las Cruces. This is the land of mañana, dude.

**Brandon:** [laughs] Yeah, I fit in perfect here. Everyone's lazy.

**Chris:** So if I were to ask you to go get something in your room right now, I'd say you'd probably take twenty minutes and come back without what I asked for. What would you be doing for those twenty minutes?

**Joe:** My theory is Facebook.

**Brandon:** No, I would just walk in and forget what I was doing. And maybe I'd check Facebook. [laughs]

**Joe:** Or watching some *L.A. Ink* behind-the-scenes footage.

**Brandon:** Either that or checking if Joe has posted some videos of scene kids doing their hair.

**Chris:** Oh, yeah. Joe, that's your thing lately, right?

**Joe:** [laughs] One night, and it haunts me for the rest of my life. I just found a bunch of tutorials on YouTube about doing scene hair. It blew my mind.

**Brandon:** And it all started with Metro Station.

**Chris:** That's Miley Cyrus's brother's band, right?

**Joe:** Yeah. He has face tattoos now.

**Brandon:** Neck tattoos, face tattoos, and hand tattoos.

**Chris:** Are his parents okay with that?

**Brandon:** Billy Ray is down for life, man.



TODD TAYLOR

**Joe:** They think it's a phase but it's not.

**Chris:** Brandon, you're a fan of Miley Cyrus.

**Brandon:** Yeah, but only because of Joe. I came home one day and Joe was on the computer. He said, "I've got to show you something. It's going to change your life," and he went on to play Metro Station's "Shake it." I didn't know who it was. I'd never heard of it, but it did change my life. [laughs] So that led me to Miley. "Party in the USA," man. It's a good song.

**Chris:** Do you feel like the older you get, the easier it is to admit that you like things like that?

**Brandon:** Yeah, totally. I'm not so concerned about trying to fit in.

**Joe:** Yeah, I think as I get older, a good pop song is a good pop song. I mean, the truth is Miley Cyrus isn't writing this shit. Some forty- or fifty-year-old man is writing these songs for her.

**Brandon:** That could be us, dude. Go ahead and ask what's next for the band. [laughs]

**Joe:** The thing about Metro Station is that Brandon hates the dude in the band who isn't Miley's Brother. It's like he really wants to kill him. [laughs]

**Brandon:** Yeah. He's trying to steal her brother's thunder and I know that totally

makes me sound like a Miley Cyrus super fan, but I'm not.

**Chris:** Joe, when we started hanging out, I was really excited because you liked shitty pop music as much as me.

**Joe:** Well, I guess I got on the iPod revolutions pretty late in the game. I would get bored with all my CDs and then start listening to the radio whenever I was driving around. That's how I heard Metro Station. And, I mean, let's face it, they are terrible.

**Brandon:** They're on the radio?

**Joe:** Yeah.

**Brandon:** I thought they were just an internet sensation. I want to ask a question for the interview. What's your opinion on Lady Gaga, Joe?

**Joe:** When she first came on, I thought it was interesting, but it's been played to death.

**Chris:** That new record is as solid, dude.

**Brandon:** Amen, brother.

**Joe:** Really?

**Brandon:** She used to be a man. I don't know that for a fact, but she totally has a man jaw.

[Brandon's girlfriend Chelsea walks outside to smoke a cigarette]

**Chelsea:** Are you guys talking about Lady Gaga?

**Brandon:** Yeah.

**Chelsea:** She's not a man.

**Joe:** She could look that way because she did steroids.

**Brandon:** Did she?

**Joe:** I don't know, man, but I just learned from a documentary last night that steroids aren't so bad. I'll go on record saying that.

**Brandon:** So that's why all my friends are going to the gym these days. You're all hooked on steroids.

**Chris:** So Brandon, you're getting fat.

**Brandon:** [laughs] Was that on your list of things to ask me?

**Chris:** No, I just thought about it.

**Joe:** You just learned how many calories are in a beer. How did that make you feel?

**Brandon:** I'm switching over the hard-A, man. It's only whiskey for me from now on.

**Chris:** So, did you invent the Pizzadilla?

**Brandon:** No, I'm pretty sure it was Dave Disorder (of Too Many Daves/ADD Records). I was at his house on New Years and he introduced me to the Pizzadilla, where you stack two Totino's pizzas on top of one another with the crust on the outside. And the rest is history.

**Chris:** You were pretty obsessed with them for a while.

**Brandon:** I still am. I've also turned Matt (from Rumspringer) on to the Pizzadilla revolution. Soon enough it will come packaged in stores.

**Chris:** You once wrote a Dear John letter to tacos.

**Brandon:** [laughs] Where did you get this shit?

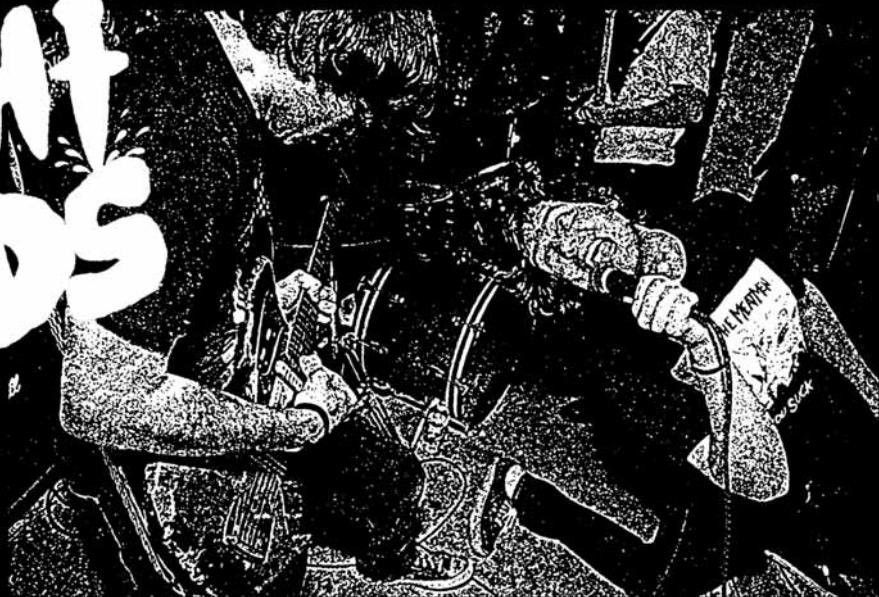
**Joe:** Research!

**Brandon:** Is that a real question on your notepad?

**Joe:** Did you?

**Brandon:** Yeah. Way to make me feel like an idiot. I really did. It was a three-part series. It was because I had been living in California where the tacos were amazing. Then I moved

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# "WHEN I'M WASTED, I LET MY FRIENDS DOODLE ON ME. I'LL BE YOUR SKETCHPAD."

East, and you don't go to Florida or Kentucky to eat tacos. So I had to switch to pizza.

**Joe:** But now that you're in Las Cruces, you're all about burritos. Has the lenguas burrito trumped the taco yet?

**Brandon:** Nothing trumps the Los Angeles taco truck, man.

**Chris:** So do you think it's time to write another letter, this time to pizza?

**Brandon:** No. I have a slice of pizza tattooed on my chest. I'm marked for life.

**Chris:** You have some shitty tattoos.

**Brandon:** Yeah.

**Chris:** Do you regret any of them?

**Brandon:** No. When I'm wasted, I let my friends doodle on me. I'll be your sketchpad. You want to give me a tattoo, Chris?

**Chris:** Actually, I tried to give Joe a tattoo once.

**Joe:** I don't have any, but the first tattoo I was going to get...

**Brandon:** Before you realized that your body is god's temple. [laughs]

**Joe:** I'm at an age where I'm starting to think if I don't have one now, maybe I shouldn't ever have one.

**Brandon:** But you've got to get scene hair.

**Chris:** You can take scene hair back. You can't take back a terrible tattoo.

**Joe:** Anyways, it was before I lived in Las Cruces, but I was here for something. We got drunk and somehow Chelsea had a tattoo pen or gun ready to go.

**Brandon:** [turns to Chelsea] Do you have a tattoo gun?

**Chelsea:** It was a needle and some India ink.

**Chris:** Do you want a tattoo after this interview, Brandon?

**Brandon:** Yeah, sure. Why not?

**Joe:** We were talking about getting a slice of pizza tattoo and I volunteered. I was going to let Chelsea tattoo my foot, but bless her heart, she said she was too fucked up and didn't feel comfortable giving me one. But Chris was like, "I'll do it!" and I immediately put my socks and shoes back on. But John (ex-Dude Jams drummer) volunteered, and Chris gave him a really terrible tattoo.

**Brandon:** Oh, I've seen that thing. Never mind. I don't want a tattoo after the interview. Thanks. [laughs]

**Joe:** It's a really sloppy triangle with some shitty circles, but I guess it's all about perception.

**Chris:** There are people that think Dude Jams is an awful band name.

**Brandon:** Me and my friend Mike from Chicago made the band name up. The point was to come up with the stupidest band name ever. I think we did.

**Chris:** Honestly, yeah, it's a stupid name, but it works. You have that revolving cast of members.

**Brandon:** Yeah, it's just a bunch of dudes jammin'. [laughs]

**Chris:** So tell me about the Hell Yeah Hut in Phoenix.

**Brandon:** What do you want to know? Do you want to know that the pool in the backyard is awesome and the house was tiny or do you want the dirt?

**Chris:** I want the dirt.

**Brandon:** We played there last June (2009). We'd been on tour for about a week and we were drinking at the house with Matt and Mikey (from Rumspringer). They had made something called "fuck juice" or something, which was just vodka, beer, and whatever else. We ended up playing the show naked that night. Apparently, someone we were with stole a yard gnome and some other stuff from the house and it was pretty embarrassing. The next morning I started taking our stuff out of the van. I was done with the crazy drama and just wanted to cancel the rest of the tour.

**Chris:** But you kept going.

**Brandon:** Yeah, I got convinced to keep going, but the alternator was going on in the van, or whatever you want to call it.

**Joe:** The chip truck. (Dude Jams had the bright idea to tour across the country in a Frito Lays delivery truck.)

**Brandon:** Yeah, that tour was a totally chip wreck. [laughs] So we played San Diego and then Riverside after that. Then we drove from Riverside to Las Vegas. The alternator was fucking dying and we had to stop twice, but we made it to Las Vegas on time. We were supposed to drive to Colorado the next day and I wanted to wake up early and get it fixed, but I was informed by the owners of the truck that we weren't going to keep going. So we cancelled the tour and took three days to drive to Las Cruces.

**Chris:** In Las Vegas though, you stayed at this guy's house.

**Brandon:** That was at East Side Joe's. Don't play there!

**Chris:** What happened?

**Brandon:** The dude told us that were going to play last, but the band who played before us apparently took their PA with them and everyone left. So we basically practiced without vocals while one of the touring bands watched us. East Side Joe gave us ten bucks and then asked us for it back, saying he was going to buy some beer. When he came back, he was just pacing the floor, playing Wu Tang Clan till four in the morning. We ended up crashing in tents in the back of the house and woke up at seven in the morning to East Side Joe kicking our tents and telling us that we had two minutes to get out before he lets the dogs loose on us.

**Chris:** Was he on drugs?

**Brandon:** Oh, he was totally tweaked out. Pine Hill Haints recently played Las Cruces, and they told me they were playing East Side Joe's. I felt really bad because they are really sweet people and were about to walk into a meth lab. I just told them not to sleep there.

**Chris:** So that was the end of that tour, right?

**Brandon:** Yeah. Then we headed back to Las Cruces.

**Joe:** So how many shows were booked on that tour?

**Brandon:** It was about thirty-seven shows.

**Joe:** And how many did you get through?

**Brandon:** I think we made fourteen of them.

**Chris:** You've had some really bad luck.

**Brandon:** All my life, man. I'm fucked from birth.

**Chris:** Fest 8, for instance. What happened there?

**Brandon:** We were going to share equipment with Too Many Daves, Watson, and all those Tampa dudes, but they got a late start. Surprise! I love them, but surprise! We got to Gainesville and registered when we started getting calls from the stage manager saying we needed to be at the show to start setting up. So I called Dave Disorder, who said they were stuck on the freeway with all the equipment and they didn't make it until after we were supposed to play. That night we were supposed to play a house show, but Shang-A-Lang, fucking rock stars that they are, had to play first and the show got shut down three songs in. [laughs]

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DANNY BENGSTON

**Chris:** For the record, you were playing in Shang-A-Lang that weekend, so I think you need to hold yourself at least partially responsible.

**Brandon:** I actually felt really bad. We used Too Many Daves' equipment and they didn't even get to play. But I didn't even think about it. I thought it was a great idea. Andy (Shang-A-Lang's drummer) was shit canned. But the friendly Gainesville police showed up and asked us to stop playing. They were actually really cool about it, though. They didn't tase anyone.

**Chris:** But the next night they did tase someone at the same house.

**Brandon:** Yeah, and we were supposed to play that night, too. [laughs]

**Chris:** So how did you get the nickname Bdumb?

**Brandon:** I've always been a space cadet. When I was fourteen or fifteen, my friend Scott gave it to me. First he called me Brandumb, then Brandummy, and then Bdumb.

**Chris:** It just got shorter as time went on.

**Brandon:** Well, everyone else just got dumber as they got older, and they were like, "Man, that's too much talking."

**Chris:** You have a tattoo on your finger that looks like it says "dumb." What's that all about?

**Brandon:** That was the super scientist idea of Matt McCrackin from Madison Bloodbath. We stayed up all night outside of the Basement House at Prefest (in Tampa) and at some point decided to get best friend tattoos. I mean, Matt's a good friend, but I wouldn't say he's my best friend. But, whatever, we got best friend tattoos. It says DJ hearts MB, but it looks like it says "dumb." But the "J" is totally going to get turned into a "U" tonight. I'm going to let you do it, Chris. Keep drinking. [laughs]

**Chris:** So you're ex-roommate recently had a birthday.

**Joe:** [laughs] I remember a lot of things that probably contributed to that night.

**Brandon:** You should probably just ask Joe, because I don't remember anything.

**Joe:** Do you remember horchata and vodka?

**Brandon:** I remember up until it seemed like a great idea to pour a huge amount of vodka into the last little bit of horchata.

**Joe:** We had a BBQ.

**Brandon:** We went to the meat market.

**Joe:** The day was planned because it was our roommate Javi's birthday and one of his last days in town before moving to Spain. So we went to the meat market and Brandon spent more money than he was comfortable spending. We cooked out and ended up making "Pink Panty Pull Down."

**Chris:** What is that?

**Brandon:** I guess it's like a Tampa thing. It's just juice, a bunch of beer, and vodka.

**Joe:** And it was pretty good. But Brandon had bought some horchata in a gallon jug at the meat market, and decided to put the rest of the vodka in the carton. I took a swig and it tasted like rubbing alcohol. And then next thing I know, it's gone; Brandon had slammed it. Then a few minutes later, I hear a girl on the porch say, "I just saw someone's balls." Then I walk out to see Brandon with this awesome shit-eating grin and no pants on. He was so happy.

**Brandon:** I was free.

**Joe:** It's the Aquarius in him, I'm telling you. I don't think he actually rubbed his balls on anyone, but he definitely tried to. Seriously, your balls would not quit.

**Brandon:** So I've been told.

**Chris:** So, Brandon, tell me about Michael's house in Las Cruces.

**Brandon:** Oh man, Michael's house! Well, he's got mannequins in poses around his house. One of them is smoking a hookah. He has a stripper pole in his bedroom and a hot tub in the living room. He's a fucking creep. He's on YouTube, looking for female roommates. Look it up.

**Chris:** He is polyamorous.

**Joe:** But you went to a party at his house and you broke one of the rules.

**Brandon:** Yeah, so we get to this party and he's got a hot tub in the living room and ice chests full of free Smirnoff Ice. And the rule that was posted on the wall read that you don't get in the hot tub without being accompanied by a lady. So one of the dudes from Rational Anthem and I got in the hot tub together. When I finally got out, Michael walked up to me with a towel. I just said, "Dude, killer party." And he looked at me with more confidence than I've ever seen in my life and said, "I know," while he wrapped a towel around my shoulders. [laughs]

**Chris:** Joe, you have a collection of really shitty shirts.

**Joe:** I don't think they're shitty. Maybe they're cheesy, but not shitty, dude. I have shirts with pictures of cats playing with other cats and dolphins jumping over the moon. I've also got a Grateful Dead shirt that I'm really scared to wear out anywhere. I mean, it's just dancing bears. It doesn't say Grateful Dead anywhere on it, but sometimes I get called out by Grateful Dead fans and that's awkward. I don't really know much about them.

**Brandon:** What's your favorite Grateful Dead record?

**Joe:** I actually don't hate the Grateful Dead. I'm not exactly a fan of what they stand for, but that first record was pretty good. I mean, it's a lot better than Nickelback.

**Chris:** So, Brandon, in your song "Dunce," I believe you say something about stealing Andy from Turkish Techno's car. Is that line true?

**Brandon:** It's totally true. It happened during the first Awesome Fest in Riverside, when I was playing in City Mouse. Misky (from City Mouse) left to go back to San Bernardino and I decided to stay in Riverside. We partied that night over at Andy's house and I slept on his couch. Apparently, I woke up in the middle of the night and Andy says I asked him for his keys so that I could get some records out of his car. So I went out to the car, grabbed some records, and left the keys in the door.

I went back to his room and, after a few minutes, I realized I really wanted some tacos. So I went back outside and found the keys in the door. At that point, I was so hammered I forgot I had gone out to Andy's car and thought it was the neighbors' car. So I figured I could just take the car, get some tacos, bring it back, and no one would ever have to know. But right when I turned out onto the street, a Riverside police officer pulled up behind me. So I freaked out and just jumped on the freeway back to San Bernardino. I woke up the next day, saw the car outside, called Andy, and told him I thought I stole his neighbors' car. When I described what the car looked like he said, "You stole my fucking car!" I'm glad I called him because I was a few minutes away from driving it out into the desert and setting that shit on fire.



# TOP FIVES

## RAZORCAKE STAFF

### Adrian Chi

#### Top 5 Favorite Bands to See Live

5. Shang-A-Lang
4. No People
3. The Street Eaters
2. Al Green
1. Shark Pants

### Adrian Salas

#### 5 Over-Covered Songs and Reasonable Alternatives to Play Instead

5. Every hardcore band does "Nervous Breakdown" by Black Flag. Instead, try "They Saved Hitler's Cock" by the Angry Samoans.
4. Every '77 style band tries the Undertones' "Teenage Kicks." Why not give the Angry Samoans' "They Saved Hitler's Cock" a go?
3. Everyone tries Billy Bragg's "A New England." Express that same heartbreak with "They Saved Hitler's Cock" next time.
2. All high school ska bands play Operation Ivy's "The Crowd." Do some skanking to "They Saved Hitler's Cock" sometime.
1. Every band that has heard the Ramones does an homage to "Blitzkrieg Bop." Break out another classic and rock "They Saved Hitler's Cock."

### Art Ettinger

- 45 Adapters, *Not One More Day 7"*
- Slices, *Cruising LP*
- The Bodies, *Angel on the Nine 7"*
- Homostupids, *Night Deacon 7"*
- Marching Orders, *Days Gone By LP*

### Ben Snakepit

#### Top 5 Best Bands I Saw at SXSW

1. Muhammadali
2. Gay Witch Abortion
3. Sexycrimes
4. Shellshag!!!
5. Vivian Girls

### Billups Allen

#### Top 5 Bands/Artists Who Suffer from Their Audience

1. Pink Floyd

2. AC/DC
3. Tom Waits
4. Nirvana
5. Turbonegro

### Corinne Elmore

#### Top 5 Moments of Harvest of Hope Fest

- Gene Doney of Dan Padilla tapping drummer of Anvil on the back to shake his hand during the middle of a song.
- Dave Decker and Jason Rockhill hug it out and come full circle from Fest 8.
- Frankie Stubbs from Leatherface telling off the "Fun Police."
- Russ from Tim Version playing the harp with Dan Padilla.
- Cheap Girls dance party.

### Craig Horky

1. Homemade flamethrowers
2. Mexican glass bottle Coca Cola
3. The Smoking Popes, live at Mac's Bar
4. The Led Zeppelin Burger from Kumas Corner in Chicago
5. Not sleeping

### Craven Rock

1. Louisville, Kentucky (The ol' town is going through a cultural renaissance that I haven't seen the likes of in over ten years. Rock on!)
2. Shorebirds, *It's Gonna Get Ugly LP*
3. *All or Nothing* by Preston L. Allen (book)
4. Snarlas, Self-titled 7"
5. *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers (book)

### CT Terry

- Boilerman Demo Tape
- This awesome album I made when I deleted the reggae songs from the Bad Brains *ROIR LP* on my mp3 player
- Gil Scott-Heron, *I'm New Here LP*
- *American Skin* by Don DeGrazia (novel)
- My personal essay/nonfiction story "I, Wigger" in the forthcoming book *The Audacity of Post-Racism*, edited for McSweeney's by Adam Mansbach

### Daryl Gussin

- Shellshag, *Rumors in Disguise*
- Eddy Current Suppression Ring, *Rush to Relax*
- Defect Defect, Self-titled 12"
- Leatherface, *The Stormy Petrel*
- Tranzmitors, live at the 5 Star

### Designated Dale

#### Top 5 Quotes from My Dad (RIP) That Make Me Laugh out Loud, Even to This Day

1. "It's stiffer than a wedding dick! Shit-can it!" Often used when something was stale beyond all human consumption and needed to be thrown away.
2. "Get a load of this *crank gobbler!*" His whimsical take on the word *cocksucker* (which he also verbalized frequently), yet *crank gobbler* was used in a more playful fashion.
3. "That really *burns my shit!*" Not an original, but funny nonetheless, especially when he was jeering on about shady people doing shady things.
4. "Ah, fuck! *Shit the bed!*" Again, not so much an original, but still funny as hell to hear bellowing forth from my father when someone seriously dropped the ball.
5. *KEEP YOUR CLAMMY DICKSKINNERS OFF.* The origin of this gem was actually printed out on an old Dymo labeler and slapped on top of my dad's fishing tackle box. Not a vocalized quote, although the word *dickskinners* was thrown around here and there over the years, always sure to raise a snicker or two when heard from my dad.

### Ian Wise

#### Top 5 Things That Will Never Be on My Top 5

1. The disco revival
2. Punk fests
3. Submitting job applications via the internet
4. Numark turntables
5. Deadlines

### Mademoiselle Ever a.k.a "the Girl about Town"

- The Flyboys, *Crayon World 7"*
- The Middle Class, *Out of Vogue 7"*
- Fleshies, *Brown Flag LP*
- Los Laxantes, *No No No No 7"*
- Rayos X 7"

### Jake Shut

1. Reunion sets by the Soviettes in March
2. Black Breath, *Heavy Breathing*
3. Leatherface, *The Stormy Petrel*
4. High On Fire, *Snakes for the Divine*
5. The Transgressions / The Side Project, *Stop Wasting My Time 7"*

### Jeff Proctor

#### Top 5 Shows I'm Looking forward to

1. Mark Sultan @ Spaceland, Silver Lake April 16
2. Nobunny, Toys That Kill, Audacity @ Babe's Warehouse, Long Beach April 23
3. Conan O'Brien @ Gibson Amphitheatre, Universal City April 24
4. Lenguas Largas, Stoned At Heart, Mexico City Rollers @ Bunkhouse, Las Vegas May 8
5. Earthmen And Strangers, Lenguas Largas, Stalins Of Sound @ Tower Bar, San Diego May 28

### Jennifer Federico

#### Top 5 Songs that Hit the Nail on the Head

1. "Going Crazy" Marked Men
2. "Get to You" Marked Men
3. "Come to Me" Bjork
4. "Bringing on the Heartbreak" Def Leppard
5. "Like Someone in Love" Bjork

### Jessica Thiringer

#### Top 5 Albums Recently Added to Media Player

1. Jack O & the Tennessee Tearjerkers, *Disco Outlaw*
2. Lonesome Wyatt & Rachel Brooke, *Bitter Harvest*
3. Lee Gocher & the Sundowners, *Flyin' High*
4. A-Bones, *Life of Riley*
5. Hank Williams III, *Damn Right, Rebel Proud*

### Jimmy Alvarado's

#### Furious Five

- Nervous Gender, *Music from Hell* CD reissue: The perfect soundtrack for all the best nightmares
- The Part Time Punks radio show on KXLU: The best punk/post-punk show you're currently gonna find on Los Angeles's terrestrial radio waves
- Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*, book: Not the best thing I've ever read, but at least now I can honestly say I've read it
- Mean Jeans, *Are You Serious* CD: Loud n'stupid in all the best ways
- A new, online-only issue of *Flipside*: Yup, you read that right. Kudos to Hud and the boys, and here's hoping they stick around a good while

I'm the big shirtless guy.  
No. The other one.

**Joe Dana**

*Top 5 Shows I Caught While Most My Friends Were Going to the Same Old Bars. A Countdown to the Most Rad*

5. Bird Strike, Hairdos On Fire, Dude Jams, Dan Padilla at Margin Mouth HQ. After Party at My Taco in Highland Park
4. The Mo-Odds Residency at Casey's in Downtown L.A. (Check 'em out now! One of L.A.'s finest.)
3. Madison Bloodbath and Off With Their Heads at the Vibe in Riverside. (I hear a music video was filmed. I'm the big shirtless guy. No. The other one.)
2. Tranzmitors' first L.A. show at 5 Star Bar with the Clorox Girls. Tie with Clorox Girls, That's Incredible, Stoned At Heart, The Images at Harold's in San Pedro
1. (Full Disclosure: I booked this show) Pretty Boy Thorson And The Slow Death, Madison Bloodbath, The Mo-Odds, and The Jew Cocks at the Blue Star in Downtown L.A. After Party at Motel 55 in Highland Park.

**Joe Evans III**

1. That's Incredible, Self-titled 7"
2. The Soviettes, *Rarities* CD-R
3. Defect Defect, Self-titled 12"
4. Leatherface, *The Stormy Petrel* CD
5. The Manix, *Van Activities* 7"

**Josh Benke**

1. Various Artists, *Land of 1,000 Dunces* LP
2. Rayon Beach, *Memory Teeth* 12" EP
3. Various Artists, *Our Boy Roy* LP
4. The Pack, Self-titled LP
5. Chinese Restaurants, *River of Shit* 7"

**Juan Espinosa**

1. Homostupids, *Night Deacon* EP
2. Slices, *Cruising* LP
3. Folded Shirt, Self-titled 7"
4. Young Governor, "Call Me When the Cat Dies" b/w "Fade Away" 7"
5. Society Nurse, *Junk Existence* EP

**Keith Rosson**

- Four New Ones and One Old One*
1. Smalltown, *Read Between the Lines* 10"
  2. Nun Chuksky, demo cassette
  3. Birds And Wires, Self-titled 12" EP
  4. Know Your Saints, *Escape Artists* CDEP
  5. Various Artists, *Music for the Proletariat* CD (released in 1995 by Allied, one of the most adventurous, awesome, and stridently political punk labels of the 1990s.)

**Kurt Morris**

1. Tanner, *Ill-Gotten Gains*
2. *The Room* (film)
3. The Vapors, *New Clear Days*
4. *Welcome to Flavor Country* #19 & #20
5. Chris Hedges, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (book)

**Lauren Measure**

- Top 5 Internet Things Female-Identified Punks Should Check Out Now*
1. threadandcircuits.wordpress.com (Mimi Nguyen's *Punk Planet* columns and *Maximum Rock'n'Roll* essays)
  2. International Girl Gang Underground: stacykonkiel.com/girlgang (riot grrrl zine call for submissions!)
  3. bikinikillarchive.wordpress.com (tons of fan submissions about the band and its continued influence)
  4. shotgunseamstress.blogspot.com (punk rock from a black, queer, feminist perspective)
  5. jigsawunderground.blogspot.com (Tobi Vail!)

**Maddy Tight Pants**

1. Pinhead Gunpowder, *Kick over the Traces* CD
2. The God Damn Doo Wop Band / Vacation Bible School, Split 7"
3. Box Elders, *Alice & Friends* LP
4. Garbo's Daughter, *Goes Pop!* Cassette EP
5. The Caravelles, *You Don't Have to Be a Baby to Cry* 7" ('60s pop masterpiece!)

**Matt Average**

- Black Cobra, live @ the Relax
- Of The Horizon, live @ the Relax
- Weedeater, live @ Ultra Violet
- Black Tusk, live @ Ultra Violet
- School Jerks, Self-titled EP

**Mike Frame**

1. Drive By Truckers, *The Big To Do*
2. Pierced Arrows, *Descending Shadows*
3. Lemuria, *Ozzy* 7"
4. The Front, *Snake Oil Salesman*
5. Four Horsemen, *Nobody Said It Was Easy*

**Nick Toerner**

1. New Creases, *About Last Night...* 7"
2. Dan Webb And The Spiders, Self-titled CD
3. Vacation, the *Do Shit* tape
4. The Soviettes, *Rarities* 12"
5. RVIVR, Self-titled LP

**Nighthawk**

- Top 5 Lines from Boogadaboogadaboogada!, Part 1*
- "The girls all look like Nancy Drew, the boys like Jim McMahon. Their fat, white, ugly parents look like Morey Amsterdam."

- "I don't wanna think about you everyday. I don't wanna shower, put on aftershave."
- "You say that you hate capitalism, and you won't compromise. When you're out of cigarettes, funny thing is your butt's full of jizz."
- "Even though you're big and famous in movies and MTV, can't the three of us go out and see midget wrestling?"
- "I don't want a career, I've got enough to deal with here, and I shelled out my last seven bucks for beer. I don't know what the fuck to do."

**Rene Navarro**

1. The Jam, *Sound Affects* LP
2. God Equals Genocide/No People, Split 7"
3. Belle And Sebastian, *Fold Your Hands Child You Walk Like a Peasant* LP
4. Agnostic Front, *Something's Gotta Give* CD
5. The Cure, *17 Seconds* LP

**Rev. Nørh**

- Wheels Of Fire, *Bad Lie b/w Come On Judy* 45
- Barreracudas, *Diet Coke b/w Dog Food* 45
- Bare Wires, *Artificial Clouds* LP
- Minors, *Live at the Bamboom Room* 3/1/80 CD
- Legendary Wings, *Questions* 45

**Naked Rob (KSCU 103.3FM)**

1. Piñata Protest, *Plethora* CD (Conjunto punk)
2. Y69, *We've Got Problems* CD (Vermont punk)
3. Regulations, *To Be Me* LP (Swedish punk rock)
4. The Sick Needs, *Exit Wounds and Plastic Band Aids* CD (Canadian punk)
5. Spawn Atomic, *Power Plant* CDEP (Misfits, but on speed!)

**Ryan Horky**

1. Smoking Popes, live at Mac's Bar, Lansing MI, 04/09/2010
2. Darkthrone, *Circle the Wagons* LP
3. Good Luck, Demo CD-R
4. The Dicks, *Kill From the Heart* LP
5. Brutal Truth, *Machine Parts* +4 7"

**Samantha Beerhouse**

- *The Blind Assassin* by Margaret Atwood
- *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army* by Jeremy Schahill
- *The Book of Dead Philosophers* by Simon Critchley
- Upcoming show: Sass Dragons at San Pedro Brewing Co.
- Crusaders Of Love, *Never Grow Up* LP

**Sean Koeppenick**

- Bands I Am Excited to See at American Skate Fest 2010*
1. CJ Ramone
  2. D.O.A.
  3. Youth Brigade
  4. 7 Seconds
  5. GWAR

**Steve Hart**

- Top Five Records with Marc Ribot on Guitar*
1. Elvis Costello, *Kojak Variety*
  2. Asmodeus: *Book Of Angels, Vol. 7*
  3. *The Prosthetic Cubans*
  4. *Party Intellectuals*
  5. *Filmworks II*

**Stevo**

1. Happy Birthday LP
2. Ted Leo, *Brutalist Bricks* LP
3. Ian Hunter. Period.
4. Hard Skin, *Hard Nuts and Hard Cunts* LP
5. Harlem, *Hippies* LP

**Todd Taylor**

- Jack Palance Band, *Get This Shit Underway* LP
- The Reactionaries, *1979* LP
- Leatherface, *The Stormy Petrel* LP
- Eddy Current Suppression Ring, *Rush to Relax* LP
- Marvelous Darlings, *Teenage Targets* 7"

**Ty Stranglehold**

- Top 5 "N" Bands*
1. New Bomb Trucks
  2. NoMeansNo
  3. Nobodys
  4. Naked Raygun
  5. Nobunny

**Vincent Battilana**

- Dirty Marquee, Fleabag, Mutoid Men, Grass Widow, and Pinhead Gunpowder at 924 Gilman Street
- Slumberland Records Anniversary Show at Rickshaw Stop in SF, CA with Henry's Dress, Go Sailor, Boyracer, Summer Cats (especially when Mike Schulman and Rose Melberg joined them to cover Black Tambourine!), Brilliant Colors, Pants Yell!, Brown Recluse, and others
- Black Tambourine, comp. LP
- Pavement's *Crooked Rain*, *Crooked Rain* and *Brighten the Corners* LP reissues
- Degrassi Junior High



#### 45 ADAPTERS: *One More Day: 7"*

A four-song single of street punk with a yen for garage rock. The songwriting could be described as mediocre, if you were going to generous. The lyrics are worse, covering the same cliché working class street punk themes that have been flogged to death, but even more cringe-inducing than usual. However, this is nothing compared to the vocals, which are literally insufferable. I am usually not too picky about singers, but this might be some of the worst caterwauling I have ever heard on a punk rock record. —Jake Shut (Longshot)

#### ABANDON: *Dead Dreams: 7"*

Portland sure has become a breeding ground for punk as of late. Maybe it's a combination of the weather and water? Whatever it is, looking from outside the bubble, the music scene there seems vibrant and active. Read somewhere that this band features ex-members of Stormcrow and Fall Of The Bastards. It shows in this band's interpretation and brand of metallic crust punk with an underlying d-beat attack. I hear a very World Burns To Death vibe going in their sound, too, with a driving Motörhead undertone that pushes the rocking factor up. The vocal delivery is more of a yelled and screamed variety and not guttural. Very crisp and rich guitar and bass tones create the backdrop for an ominous experience. An accomplished and experienced drummer ties everything together with added beats and accents. —Donofthedeath (Defector)

#### ACNE AND MACHINE GUNS:

##### *A Chicago Punk Rock Compilation Vol. 1: Cassette*

This is a sampling of Chicago punk rock scene that includes ten bands and nineteen songs. The biggest highlight here was the two songs by The Blue Waves: "Closer" and "Time and Tension." These are some pretty cool dance punk tunes that have some undercurrent stylings of The Faint's sound minus any of the electronica. It's like The Blue Waves throw jazz, old blues, and '60s rock up against a wall and what sticks sounds one hundred percent organic and original. But this band is also the biggest disappointment because, according to their MySpace, they are on indefinite hiatus. Side A of this tape is the stronger side in just pure variety and quality. The band I Hate People offers two tracks that have the whole old school punk vibe of Minor Threat going for them. The Unnecessary Buttons have two tracks that sound like they were recorded by two different bands. I could see their



tune "Pygmy" being written by the Velvet Underground and being sung by Nico, while their track "King Cole" is a guitar-rich instrumental with lots of distortion and a heavy sound. The B-side of this compilation had a lot more humorous pop punk, but my favorite tracks were the ones by Shortstop from Tokyo. These guys and gal are an all-out ska band that had me all nostalgic for my ska-core skankin' days. Their tunes seemed inspired by Reel Big Fish for the crooner vocals and flashy guitar solos. This tape is worth getting, just for posterity in having a snap shot of the underground Chicago punk rock scene. This tape has great clip art cover design, all the bands and songs are concisely listed, and the tape itself is blue and professionally labeled. You can't go wrong getting your hands on one of these three hundred tapes. —N.L. Dewart (Nervous Laughter, mspace.com/nervouslaughterrecords)

#### ANCHOR, THE: *Self-titled: CD*

What a way to start my reviews this time around! There I was in the parking lot of the post office with my package from Razorcake torn open on the car seat beside me. I was in a daze because The Anchor had just planted a Chuck Taylor square in my ass! Very reminiscent of some of my favorite bands of the late '90s, such

as Jon Cougar Concentration Camp or Pinhead Circus. Melodic and raspy-voiced punk rock that just sounds like the beer supply is never going to run out and the pizza is on the way. Don't get me wrong, this disc isn't all "happy all the time." I just think it would be a good soundtrack to me getting drunk and eating pizza. Like said beer and pizza, I want more of The Anchor, too! —Ty Stranglehold (ADD)

#### ANTIISEN / HÖLLEY 750: *Split: CD*

Charlotte's AntiSeen remains one of the most unique, distinct, long-term players in punk. The legendary Jeff Clayton and Joe Young are now joined by a new bassist and drummer for this killer six-song recording. Here they pay tribute to their classic punk roots with covers of "Belsen Was a Gas" by the Sex Pistols and "The Witch" by the Sonics. There are also two terrific new songs and two live tracks. AntiSeen will remain overlooked by the majority of knee-jerk clowns in this subculture, but those who give them a chance are always spellbound by their signature blend of '77 punk and hardcore with a tinge of country. Hölle 750 gets the honor of sharing this split CD and they're a fun, scummy band in their own right. Hailing from Denver, they play self-described "trucker punk," with sadistic, snarled vocals and a bit of a late 1980s thrash/crossover influence.

Their half of the split includes a well-done cover of Motörhead's "Ramones." Like AntiSeen, Hölle 750 straddles the fine line of being "anti-scene" while simultaneously adding so much to that same scene they decry. There's an *After School Special*-esque message in all of this. Think about it. —Art Ettinger (Zodiac Killer, zodiackillerrecords.com)

#### BATTLEFLASK: *Smile!*

##### *Tomorrow Will Be Worse: CD*

Second full length from this L.A. band that may remind some of Street Dogs, Rancid, and even Dead Kennedys. "Insurrection Generations" and "Bozo the Stomper" kept replaying in my head long after I had removed this record. Tight songs with sing-along chorus features make this a record worth revisiting. We'll see where record number three lands these boys in the punk rock universe. —Sean Koepenick (Fallen Angel)

#### BEAT THE RED LIGHT: *Self-titled: CD*

It goes back and forth from flashy metal to straight forward ska punk. At first, I was just surprised that bands like this still existed, but, admittedly, it's not bad—the songs just tend to go on too long, either in having a minute-long intro or multiple extra parts that feel like they're just thrown in for no reason. (My own personal opinion? Longer songs work best with the Superchunk approach of taking an awesome riff and playing the hell out of it.) —Joe Evans III (TNS, tnsrecords.co.uk)

#### BERMONDSEY JOYRIDERS, THE:

##### *Self-titled: CD*

Two geezers with some serious credentials (we're talking former members of Heavy Metal Kids, Cocksparrer, and Chelsea here) and a former pro skater turned drummer kick up some fine punk rock. There are even a few nods to their former bands, including a cover of "Running Riot." Gary Lammin's voice is a bit rough around the edges sometimes, but they more than handle their own and deliver tunes that don't sound soft in the middle. The demo quality of the recording actually enhances things a bit, too. Nice work. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fuel Injection)

#### BILL BONDSMEN: *Accident Prone: 7"*

Much like Local Cross's outing with the Cola Freaks, on this record you get two doses of warped, questioning punk rock. Yet with only two tracks, the Bill Bondsmen develop these bleak landscapes that make Cormac McCarthy's darkest shadows look like Louis L'Amour's book covers. Reminiscent of both the Estranged

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and We March. Coiled desperation from the frozen, haunted tundra of Detroit. —Daryl (Local Cross)

# **BIRDS AND WIRES: Self-titled: 12" EP**

You ever call it in the air? You ever just *look* at a record—you've never heard the band before, nothing—and just get the feeling it's gonna hit you right between the eyes, like, *perfectly*? That's the feeling I got with this four-song twelve inch. One look and I was pretty sure; one spin and I was positive. That's all it took. The songs are long and take some time to gather themselves and fully depart the station—but when they do, you're in for the long haul. Complex, dense-but-pretty music that's filled to the brim with a sense of place and atmosphere. There's a working template of mid-tempo '90s screamo with a heavy nod to the drama and willful theatrics of Moss Icon, coupled with a more modern sense of a slowly gathering calamity that bands like Aussitot Mort and Amanda Woodward manage to nail every time. Like the fucking bottom's about to drop out and you can't wait for that to happen, you know? It's a rare bit of music that really takes me out of myself these days, fully out of my own head, but these four beautiful and ferocious songs by Birds And Wires have done it repeatedly since that first listen. —Keith Rosson (Amor y Lucha)

# **BIRTHDAY SUITS:**

**The Minnesota: Mouth to Mouth: CD**  
Punchy, strange punk that flip flops

between some of the most undeniable hooks this side of Denton and guitar-heavy crunch time that's on par with the Congelliere-tone. I've spent a lot of time listening to this band—probably their split with the Marked Men receiving the most spins—and nothing could have prepared me for their live set: two truly talented musicians, skillfully concocting a sound that's so massive, bizarre, and enticing. If there were ever a common ground between The Blind Shake and Shellshag, it would be the Birthday Suits. And if you're a fan of punk that should be considered "post-punk," but never will be due to ridiculous presumptions, I suggest checking out all three of those bands. —Daryl (Nice & Neat)

# **BLOTTO / CONNIPTION FITS / SASS DRAGONS / PROHIBITION: Split: 7"**

It's always nice to open a package from Razorcake and find a record that you actually want to review. I love Blotto and the track on this four-way split 7" is no exception. It's definitely the standout track here, and you should buy this for that reason alone. The other groups are no slouches though: Prohibition's song is pretty solid and the Sass Dragons are fast and fun. I thought the Conniption Fits had the weakest offering here, but they list their bass player as "Dale Nixon" so you've gotta love that. Cover art by Ben Snakepit! —Ryan Horky (ADD / Let's Pretend, address: com / mspace.com/letspretendrecs)

# **BLUE RIBBON BOYS: Suicidal EP: CD**

Fun punk irreverence that brings to mind the glory days of the Weirdos, Tits, Creamers, Stitches, and more. The most carefree fun I've had in awhile, even on the dorky songs like "Roses and Razorblades." —Jessica T (Rockin' Stan)

# **BOX ELDERS:**

## **Alice and Friends: Cassette**

I am not a fan of the recent cassette tape craze that's sweeping the nation. My girlfriend and I have three cassette players between us and not a single one of them works. In fact, I don't know anyone who owns a functioning cassette player. It was worth it to track one down, though, because the Box Elders are three shit and write indelibly catchy tunes. The problem I have with this type of release is that the album is readily available on LP, CD, and MP3. Are there really that many folks out there who listen to music exclusively in the cassette format? No way. I'm not convinced that tapes like this will survive in the music delivery landscape other than as annoying novelties. Still, if your heart is set on purchasing a cassette to stuff into your hopelessly outdated Walkman, this is the one to buy because the Box Elders rule. —Josh Benke (Burger)

# **BREWTALE THIRST: Hard Work: CD**

Six more songs from these hard-drinkin', hard-rockin' Seattlites. Nothing fancy, no frills, just some nice, fast punk tunes about drinking from

dudes who seem to know what they're talking about. Every time I hear these guys, they remind me of Fear, and that's not a bad thing at all. Very nicely recorded and mixed by Conrad Uno. —Ryan Horky (Wet Brain)

# **BUKKAKE BOYS: 2nd: 7"**

Wait! Read this review. This band isn't some cock rock'n'roll bar shit. They just have a stupid name. Total early OC-meets-Boston hardcore forklift brawl. And if there are any rules at this rumble, the participants are unaware. God bless the Bukkake Boys for keeping the drum count at the beginning of most of the songs, and for being so gloriously hostile to everyone who lives in the same town as them. —Daryl (Sorry State)

# **CANADIAN RIFLE: Facts: 7"**

Chicago's grouchiest strike again: three new songs, hot on the heels of their LP. Canadian Rifle's sound has been getting progressively darker, and that depression gave their LP a couple of snoozy spots. Since then, they've figured out how to harness that ill will and use that anger to polish tiny diamonds of punkness from what had threatened to become charcoal bricks. Here's to a new direction and rejuvenation for one of my favorite Chicago bands. —CT Terry (Residue, residue-records.com)

# **CAPITALIST KIDS:**

## **Acceptable Boundaries: CD-R**

Interesting bit of work here. They appear to be a contemporary band

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that hails from Texas, but musically and lyrically they would've fit in quite nicely with the Lookout Records/Northern California "geekcore" bands of the mid/late-'80s. Zippy, poppy punk here with lyrics that vacillate between the personal and political, all of which is done well above average. —Jimmy Alvarado (Capitalist Kids)

#### CAVES: Self-titled: 7"

Four songs of rolling, melodic punk from England. Caves have indie-influenced guitar breaks, female vocals, and whoah-oh hooks. I wish they resisted the temptation to do the refrain one last time, but hey, that repetition does offer another chance to sing along. This record is definitely a winner and should be checked out, especially if you like The Soviettes or Lemuria. —CT Terry (Specialist Subject, specialistsubjectrecords.co.uk)

#### CIRCLE ONE: Patterns of Force: LP

Circle One—with John Macias's vocals drenched in oil slicks of reverb—is like convincing someone to listen to the Dead Kennedys or Cypress Hill for the first time. It sounds like a band fronted by a cartoon character toying with opera... and it can be a jarring experience. When "The Gospel" and "Our Sword" kick in, you realize, "Oh. Fuck. They're Christians." Yes and no. John was deeply religious. He also had grave mental problems that would tragically end his life in Santa Monica after being shot multiple times after throwing someone over the

side of a pier. There's also the gray area of John's cult-like personality, the violence (to others and himself) and The Family's gang tendencies and tactics. So, yeah, Circle One is a cryptic, paradoxical band that doesn't unravel cleanly. They're more like a chunky candy bar left out in the sun. No matter how you try, there'll always be a bit of a mess on the wrapper, but it's still worth the effort. Also, unlike ninety-nine percent of East L.A. bands, Circle One actually released vinyl when they were an active band, which was no small feat. Originally released in 1983 by Upstart Records, *Patterns of Force* was never that easy to find. But with Mass Media and Puke N Vomit co-releasing this re-issue, it's much more than just an artifact. It's a fascinating and powerful snapshot of a time in punk in a place that didn't get much attention compared to other bands—Black Flag, Circle Jerks—just fifteen miles away. If you've never crossed paths with Circle One or if you're in the doldrums of listening to the same twenty-five "punk favorites" albums in your collection, this comes highly recommended and remains to hold its own distinct personality over twenty-five years after its initial release. —Todd (Mass Media / Puke N Vomit)

#### COCOMA: Things Are Not All Right: CD

Lots of bands have brilliant singles and then some filler. CoCoComa has less explosions and more solid, invigorating punk rock. Bands don't have to reinvent

punk; just got to do it right. CoCoComa is fuckin' dependable. —Speedway Randy (Goner)

#### COCONUT COOLOUTS: Halloween Party Songs: 7"

The title is no joke—these tunes sound like they come straight outta the set of the DJ at Marilyn Munster's sweet sixteen party on Dr. Frankenstein's Isle of Evil. "The Last Man that You Will Ever See" is the darker of the two, while "The Monsters Crash (the Regular People's Party)" is the more celebratory stomper. My inner monster kid likes this loads. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap, dirtnaprecs.com)

#### CRIME: Extortion: EP

Let me get this out of the way, so we're all clear here, Crime are one of my all time favorite bands. The whole mythic aura, the music, all of it. So I was a bit surprised to see they put out a new record. Didn't really expect that. Now, after listening to it, I wonder if this wasn't Crime, would anyone care enough to put it out? There's nothing on here that is really interesting. The team-up with Gnawa Express on the B side is a little out of left field, but, at the same time, it's just rock'n'roll in the end, despite the Moroccan music cut in at parts. "Crazy Beat" sounds pretty similar to "I Feel Alright" from the Stooges, only less power. Seriously, if this wasn't Crime, I doubt anyone would be interested in hearing this. Absolutely disposable. Blehhhh.... —M.Avr (FYBS, fybsrecords.com)

#### CRIME IN STEREO: I Was Trying to Describe You to Someone: LP

In the interest of candor, I haven't heard this band since 2008's *Selective Wreckage*, their singles collection, which was also my introduction to 'em. So yeah, I'm definitely a novice when it comes to their catalogue. I do remember not being terribly impressed with *Selective Wreckage* but willing to write off the questionable production tricks and stutters and skips in pacing due to the fact that it was indeed a singles collection. The problem is that Crime In Stereo suffers from the same thing here: *I Was Trying...* still sounds like a group relying way too heavily on flash and smoke; in effect-trickery instead of actual songwriting. Like they're more interested in crafting interesting sections rather than whole songs, you know? In a song like "Drugwolf," the guitarists utilize more effects than The Edge did throughout the entire goddamn recording of *The Joshua Tree*, and "Not Dead," the following song, sounds like a drawn-out mixmash of Nirvana and Marilyn Manson or something equally as ridiculous. And that's just two songs. The production values are either incredible or woefully overblown, depending on your viewpoint, and while there are brief flashes of hardcore scattered throughout the album, the band's mostly relying on these strange, nearly prog-rock structures peppered with speed bumps of radio-friendly dross. What is great in theory just makes it, in reality, nearly impossible to discern one song from another. The whole thing eventually

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comes across as background noise with some odd random jarring parts thrown in every once in a while. Some people would say it's a "challenging" record; to me it just sounds like various song parts smooshed together and coated in some kind of ProTools gloss in the hopes that it'll sound like a cohesive album. There are undoubtedly some fascinating parts here, but that doesn't exactly make for compelling and repeated listens, you know? —Keith Rosson (Bridge 9)

#### DANGERS: *Messy, Isn't It?* LP+CD

Good effin' lord! If you're in the market for let-it-all-out hardcore that's full of passion and righteousness, then I highly suggest this band. Vitriol Records has definitely become known for pushing the envelope for both packaging and sound, and this latest release is quite a piece of work. Dangers are able to bridge the gap between an emotional conversation between close friends/family and a fucking maelstrom of human limbs and torsos the size of a DIY venue. While the average hardcore fan (ex: B9, RevHQ, S&F Fest) may be completely turned off by the experimental, and artful, aspects of this record, the amount of thought that must have gone into it is incredibly daunting. It's impossible not to be completely wrapped up in it as it descends into despair, then rises up, completely determined. Completely consumed. In addition to this record being an amazing accomplishment, the times I've seen this band live, it truly was an inspiring experience.

Something that hardcore should always be, but falls short of all too often. —Daryl (Vitriol, [info@vitriolrecords.com](mailto:info@vitriolrecords.com)/Penguin Suit)

#### DAYLIGHT ROBBERY:

##### *Through the Confusion*: LP

It's obvious how similar Chicago's Daylight Robbery are to X. When you hear the noirish rock'n'roll and male/female crooning, John Doe and Exene come right to mind. But, after seeing Daylight Robbery last night, and playing their LP this morning, I'm prepared to offer a new theory: Daylight Robbery sound like The B-52s. Bear with me! Tell me that Christine doesn't sound like Kate Pierson. Tell me that the wide space between the driving rhythm section and Dave's scratchy guitar don't offer a new wave danciness that might be heard on "Planet Claire." Sure, Dave doesn't sound like Fred Schneider (for shame!), and they're playing moody punk with slice o' city life lyrics, but there's more to Daylight Robbery than your X or Gun Club comparisons can provide. X make me want to squint through my hangover and Gun Club make me want to drive into the desert and ditch my car, but Daylight Robbery make me want to throw a party and serve neon punch. Ten songs that blow by fast. —CT Terry (Residue, [residue-records.com](http://residue-records.com))

#### DEADLY COMPANIONS:

##### *You're Not the Only One*: 7"

Whoa—I heard an earlier split 7" with the Deadly Companions and was not into it; felt uninspired. But

this is freaking great, with a kickass get-up-and-go I felt the last one missed. Three songs chock full of energy, pulling the fuzz out of the pedals with strained, anxious vocals trying to push the depression away. Speedy and trashy and tight: the way you want it when you drive real fast. Guitarist Rob Yazzie played bass in The Fells, keeping the static family tree going. —Speedway Randy (Post Party Depression, [myspace.com/deadlycompanions](http://myspace.com/deadlycompanions))

#### DECAY, THE: *This Month's Rent*: CD

The Decay appears at first blush to play typically generic, sing-a-long melodic punk. But it doesn't take long for this young Canadian band to grab you with their earnestness. It's incredible to think of how many kids have recorded songs about being broke and punk over the years, yet The Decay still packs quite the punch. I'm rocking to and fro like the autistic audience in that old Billy Joel video as I'm grooving to these catchy tunes. Play *This Month's Rent* and pretend you're on a punk version of *Silent Library* in which the goal is not to smile. There's no way you'll make it two songs in before you're grinning ear to fucking ear. —Art Ettinger (Juice Box, [juiceboxdotcom.com](http://juiceboxdotcom.com))

#### DEFECT DEFECT: *Self-titled*: 12"EP

Finally available on vinyl, this is one killer 12". Defect Defect is one of the best bands in the U.S. playing mid-(to fast)-tempo, straight-forward hardcore punk. It definitely has its flourishes

and intricacies, but its most valuable asset is its bass-heavy, to-the-point aggression. No clutter, no distractions, just rock solid songs. It's been a long time since the *Words* EP came out, but this record has made it worth the wait. —Daryl (Residue)


#### DESTRUCTORS 666:

##### *POW! That's Kill Music 666*: CD

Completely thorough discography (plus new tracks) for this original English UK82 band. Meticulous, living-history liner notes, sentimentally notating dates, times, places, and reasons. Hard-charging tracks like "Bullshit" and "Scuzz Rock Accelerator" take me back to more carefree days. —Jessica T (Rowdy Farrago, [destructors666.com](http://destructors666.com))


#### DETOURNEMENT: *Awaken with Millions from One Heart*: 11" heart-shaped surface, 7" playing surface

I question the format size because the actual playing surface is that of a 7", the actual size of the red, heart-shaped vinyl is eleven inches. But this record does not need a collectability gimmick, in my opinion. The anti-capitalistic, working-class communisto punk rocks really well. Good, politically-oriented, blistering punk rock that touches primal nerves and makes you want to smash the state. However, the mix sucks. The record sounds like it was recorded on a two-track through a towel. Despite that, however, this is a really solid record and I enjoyed every second of it. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Pirates Press)



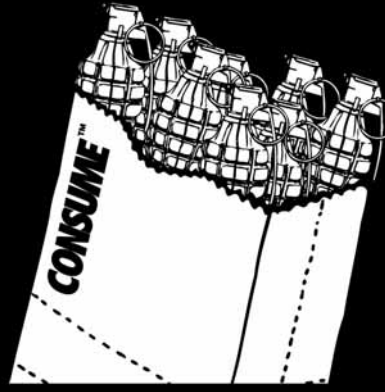
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**DISCO FOR FERNS, A:**  
**Chemical Burr: CD**

Good bass and drum duo playing three chord hardcore. The band is billed as grindcore, but the songs on the demo sort of resemble Cryptic Slaughter with a hint of early Dischord vocals at the helm. Maybe they play faster live, but the pace on the demo is more in the vein of pissed-off skate rock. The recording is low-fi. This is what you want to hear when you put on a demo; it sounds urgent and unpretentious. —Billups Allen (OBZ8, [myspace.com/adiscoforferns](http://myspace.com/adiscoforferns))

**DISCO FOR FERNS, A:**  
**Look Who's Laughing: CD**

I try to tell myself that behind every horrendous piece of music I hear there are real people who may have been passionate and well-intentioned about the slop they ended up putting together. A Disco For Ferns is probably not a bunch of kids who hastily tossed this crapfest together to impress their friends. They're probably people who really put their hearts into this music, intending to put together something meaningful. It's just a matter of coincidence that the fifteen minutes worth of music that came out sounds like a bunch of four-year-olds screaming and growling into a tape recorder while their older brothers pretend to play real instruments. Unfortunately, I don't review intentions. —MP Johnson (Self-released, [myspace.com/adiscoforferns](http://myspace.com/adiscoforferns))

**DISPENSED, THE: *Bury Your Heart*: CD**

This is often mid-tempo emo/pop punk, similar to more recent bands like The Crush or Cardinal Sin. It feels like there's a lot of Face To Face influence, as well as some Get Up Kids, and that this would fit in with a lot of late '90s/early '00s Vagrant Records stuff. —Joe Evans III (Retrace, [myspace.com/retracerecords](http://myspace.com/retracerecords))

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIAS:**  
***We Barely Just Got Here*: CD**

Really sharp and on-point. This record grabs you by the throat from the first notes and doesn't let go. Moreover, it gets better each time I hear it because I'm always finding something new and interesting about the tunes with each listen. It's difficult to pinpoint precisely what the District Of Columbias sound like. A quick look at their Myspace page reveals a wide range of disparate influences and, somehow, the band seems to incorporate them all. Nonetheless, here goes: Quicksand meets Unsane, but with a more traditional rock'n'roll vibe to it. If you've ever felt blessed by the swirling, symphonic glory that was Quicksand (the second band listed among their influences), you'll like this record. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Inya Face)

**DRAGO / 007 HUNDRED CLUB: Split: CD**

This CD has great cover art, first of all. I'd love to see it blown up to full LP size. It's obvious that neither band takes itself too seriously. 007

Hundred Club plays fast, occasionally poppy old school punk/hardcore. It's nothing new or original, but it seems like they do it with heart and that's what really counts. Drago have a similar sound but aren't quite as good. They do have a fairly entertaining anti-Ian MacKaye song where they pronounce his name incorrectly and use lyrics from Minor Threat songs to point out how stupid he is. It seems sort of lame to get mad that somebody chose not to drink and sang about it thirty years ago, but hey, that's just my opinion. —Ryan Horky (Winter Street, [myspace.com/winterstreetrecords](http://myspace.com/winterstreetrecords))

**DSB / ASSASSINATORS: Split: 7"**

A Japanese / Danish split of excellent melodic, crusty hardcore. DSB: Tokyo's self-described "radical punk" who have a poster proclaiming "Radical Jawbreaker" deliver galloping drums, bubbling bass lines, and stratospheric vocals. The dude sounds like a vulture with a rasp and the lady sounds almost operatic in a sinister-but-sweet way. Copenhagen's The Assassimators fit well into the recent tradition of sweeping, compassionate melodic crust in the vein and on par with Signal Lost and Harum Scarum. This isn't a slight—they sound like Banarama and their fastest and toughest, mixed with Tragedy's lion roar and power. There's a good chance that both bands are breaking up in 2010, and, ironically, this is a great introduction to both of them if you've never

given 'em a listen. —Todd (Alerta Antifascista, [no-pasaran.org](http://no-pasaran.org), Halo Of Flies, [halooffliesrecords.com](http://halooffliesrecords.com))

**EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING: *Rush to Relax*: CD**

I feel like a gushing, horny teenager when I try to explain the Eddy Current Suppression Ring. That feeling ain't all *Tiger Beat*-y for the dudes in this Australian band (and *Razorcake* #55's cover band), but the music itself; their ability to clip off the lawn tips of the best of music from the '60s, '70s, and '80s and somehow shape that into contemporary, sculpted, interesting songs is nothing short of phenomenal. And instead of sounding like a band on a soft rock music station floating along, dumping crap in your ear, the effect is almost music-narcotic. I realize I'm a music dork. Got it. A funny thing happens when I play ECSR to new people whose taste I respect: "Wow they sound like X, mixed with Z," where the X and Z are among the person's favorite bands. Where X and Z are rarely the same, from person to person and widely divergent, but I can see it and it makes sense. Over and over again. That's incredible. It shows not only how deep the pool ECSR are drawing from, but I'm convinced they're a band chock full of music dorks, too, and this music's just a human form of electricity inside of them. It's not a phase, dabble, or calculation. The crib notes comparing *Rush to Relax* to their second full-length *Primary Colours*? It's a bit less brooding, and quite

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possibly one of the brightest-sounding social anxiety records I've ever heard. Recommendations for records don't come higher. I'll be playing ECSR for years and years to come. (If you look close to the cover, the band had a plane fly a banner of their name behind them as they posed for the shot. Awesome.) –Todd (Goner)

#### EL BANDA: *Skutki Uboczne: 2xLP*

I was first introduced to this wonderful band from Poland through Todd during a visit to Razorcake HQ. It was the band's debut record, *Przejdzie ci*, which he knew would hit my soft spot for my love of female-fronted bands. I bought a copy out of the distro without a listen and took it home to be quite impressed with what came out of the speakers. Sometime later, making an order from the label in Poland, the label asked if I would mind if my order was delayed so they could send me a review copy of El Banda's new 7" to review. Woohoo! New 7"?! No problem! Some time passed and I was shopping on the label's website again and I saw that there was an upcoming double LP with twenty-four songs. Twenty-four songs?! It was a no-brainer that I had to possess this. I've got the record in my hands and love that it is encased in a heavy gatefold cover. I quickly appreciate the artiness of the photos used throughout. Musically, it did not disappoint. The progression of this band is pushed even further than their debut LP. Post punk, jazz, punk, and the kitchen sink is thrown out there

for an aural delight. It's good to hear this band pushing the limits to see what might come together. Even with the experimentation, the energy level maintains a high level of aggression and rawness. It doesn't dip when you can hear the band being playful. With so many songs to digest, I did not feel it was labored. The variety justifies the attention. El Banda are truly one of the most captivating bands that has caught my attention in the last few years. –Donofthedeath (Pasazer)

#### EX-GENTLEMEN, THE: Self-titled: CDEP

The Ex-Gentlemen are two parts '80s rock (think Cheap Trick), one part '77 punk (think Generation X), and one part Green Day. The result? Decent rock'n'roll with catchy parts, power chords, and plenty of sing-a-long-ness. For me, it was a bit too heavy on the general '80s rock'n'roll side of things (as evidenced by all four of these songs being about a minute too long for my highly caffeinated attention span), but for a self-released demo, this is pretty good. If this were a cereal, it'd be Honeycomb—the sugar is there, but you have to slog through a lot of whole grains and corn bran to get there. –Maddy (Self-released)

#### FACE VALUE: *Rode Hard, Put Away Wet: Clevo HC '89-'93: CD + DVD*

This is definitely one of the best discography releases I've seen: a full CD of material, including the first demo, and a DVD of live footage,

photos, flyers, etc. If you are at all into Face Value, then you should by all means pick this up. When most bands of the time Face Value existed in were mimicking other hardcore bands, Face Value looked to rock bands for musical inspiration, much like the first wave hardcore bands before them had done. Check the solo on "You Claim" or the song "Blind Men." The music is definitely hardcore and is energetic as hell: fast without being a blur and the vocals are belted out with conviction. Their best material is *The Price of Maturity* LP, though I imagine most will like their *Coming of Age* EP, since it sticks to the late '80s hardcore sound the most. You would have never expected Erba to go on and form a band like Gordon Solie Motherfuckers a few years later, though they are similar in sound. I guess my point is, most people from the late '80s, early '90s hardcore scene faded away and this dude kept coming back, better and better. The DVD has video from various shows around the Midwest and the East Coast. Sound quality is decent and it's an interesting document of the times. Seriously, if you like Face Value, or even Gordon Solie Motherfuckers, 9 Shocks Terror, etc, then get this. –M.Avr (Smog Veil, smogveil.com)

#### FED UP: *Read Between the Lines: 7" EP*

This is at least the third band I've heard going by this name, which isn't necessarily a bad thing when one takes into consideration that

they lay down some serious hardcore here—flailing drumsticks, buzzsaw guitars, and a singer with an apparent fascination with stabbing those who piss him off. It'll be interesting to see how the other Fed Ups of the world (if they still exist) manage to up the ante, 'cause these kids have set the bar pretty high here. –Jimmy Alvarado (World Won't Listen)

#### FELLOW PROJECT / JONESIN: *Split: 7"*

It's kinda funny: I've had releases by both of these bands for a long time, but never really listened to either of them. A while back, there was a mishap with an order I did with Dead Broke. When I received my actual order, I got a free Fellow Project CD for the trouble. I never listened to it, thinking that it was something that they just had lying around (I guess that's just how my mind works). Jonesin did a split with Shang-A-Lang. I listened to the Jonesin side when I got it, noting that it was ex-Down In The Dumps. I recall thinking that it was okay, but much preferring the SAL side—no offense, but they do an awesome fucking Lou Reed song on their side. So this is kind of the first time that I've really listened to either band. Fellow Project offer up some poppy, punky post hardcore. Jonesin lay down two tunes in the Tiltwheel via Crimpshrine vein of gruff-voiced dude punk. –Vincent (Kiss Of Death)

#### FIELD DAY: *Christian Television: 7"*

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Records roster (Pivot, Popesmasers, etc.) and pour it in a tumbler full of the huge shoegaze/indie scene from a few years later. Throw in some packaging that's more Mr. Pibb than Dr. Pepper (the cover's a tad forgettable, sorry) and you've got your Field Day. All three songs are instrumental with the first two being quick, mostly pretty, bursts of sound. But on the flip, the song "Barbie with Gun" really forces you outside the box a bit. Weird, *weird* time signatures, complex notes that leap into crazy spasms of distortion and then back into the light-hearted, "fun with teddy bears" romp. I personally didn't care for their stuff, but I gotta give 'em points for testing the sturdiness of expectations and still sounding like a cohesive unit. —Keith Rosson (Rorschach)

#### FIGGS, THE: *Casino Hayes: 7"*

The Midwest is lousy with longtime underrated or slow-to-be-appreciated bands. I'm not sure what the correlation between oceans and widespread popularity is, but Milwaukee's Figgs have been playing straight-ahead, under-the-radar, thoughtful poppy rock'n'roll for years and years. They're also a "fan of music" band, a "band's band"—a band that's happy to sit down and chat with you, see if you're enjoying yourself, instead of lighting itself on fire, shoving themselves into a cannon, and ripping their clothes off so you take notice (only to be forgotten just as quickly). They toured with the Knack in the mid-'90s, should be on the same couch as Cheap Trick (or at

least the same living room) in people's minds, and have laid down two more rockin', steady, mellower tracks here. —Todd (Peterwalkee, peterwalkee.com)

#### FIST OF THE NORTH STAR:

##### *Here's to an Early Grave: CD*

Fast shout-along hardcore anthems with dynamic touches of rock'n'roll. Lyrics about boozin', losin', and not goin' to church. And guitar solos. Lots of guitar solos. I'd love to be shitfaced in a bar one night and have these dirtbags hit the stage. They strike me as the type of dudes who take an airborne beer bottle as a compliment. —CT Terry (Stik Man, stikmanrecords.com)

#### FLAT TIRES: *Payin Dues...Again: CD*

I am not sure if the Confederacy of Scum still exists, but the Flat Tires would sure be a strong addition. More of a rockin' country punk sound along the lines of Hellstomper than the gruff punk of Antiseen, but they would fit right in there nonetheless. They even got Alan "The Goddamn" King from Hellstomper and Polecat Boogie Revival to record vocals for the second song, "PBR." Eight songs of whiskey-fueled North Carolina punk country blues and if that's your bag, you will want this. —Mike Frame (Zodiac Killer, zodiackillerrecords.com)

#### FUCKFACE: *Self-titled: CD*

A rhythmic blast from my past, straight out of Milwaukee. I was a fan of Fuckface from their frequent shows in Green Bay during my early twenties.

They made quite an impression on me with at least four drummers pummeling floor toms behind acidic post punk guitars and vocals, or so I remember from the perspective of fifteen years later. Flash forward to 2010, when I get my new batch of reviews for Razorcake and, lo and behold, a fresh release by Fuckface. The sixteen tracks on the CD stand the test of time. To a certain degree, it is a time capsule to that meaty post punk sound that had a stronghold in the western Great Lakes region with bands like the Jesus Lizard, God Bullies, and the entire Amphetamine Reptile Records stable leading a hellaciously noisy charge in the '90s. Thank you Latest Flame Records for putting out this slab of Wisconsin noise history. —Jake Shut (Latest Flame)

#### FUNEROT: *And Then You Fucking Die, Man: LP*

Northwestern metal punk that starts out sounding like Poison Idea, but branches out. As the album progresses, other influences creep in—the technical ecstasy of late Black Flag, the biker classic rock of early Motörhead, the tongue-in-cheek bombast of Karp and maybe even some epic metal, cribbed from Killers, Kill 'Em All and a few other albums with "kill" in the title. Speaking of "kill," this record is killer. They do a great job of writing riffs that are complex and unique without sacrificing energy and becoming wanky. I can't put my finger on what it is about this band, but they have that hilarious roommate vibe, like their

motto would be, "The world sucks, so let's stay in with a couple twelve packs and make up a bunch of inside jokes to keep ourselves entertained." I'm there. Ex-members of Adventure and Goddammit. —CT Terry (Funerot)

#### GARBO'S DAUGHTER: *Goes Pop!: Cassette-EP*

Super bubblegum all-girl pop! Think: Nikki And The Corvettes, Candy Girl, the Pinkz, et. al! With Brentwoods-styled silliness! Plus they cover a Phil Spector song ("Oh Yeah, Maybe Baby")! Only complaint: cassette tape release? I get the ridiculousness of such an endeavor, but I want this on vinyl! If this were a cereal, it'd be Corn Pops! This is perfect for your next punk rock sleepover! —Maddy (Burger)

#### GOD EQUALS GENOCIDE / NO PEOPLE: *Split: 7"*

Every time I hear God Equals Genocide, I want to dance and every time I read the lyrics, I'm baffled by how much more I can like a song I already love. Songs about paranoia and the shackles of routine. Getting this band's stuff one 7" at a time is like only being able to have one bite of a burrito every few months. In their defense, I'd probably have a heart attack if I held a full length in my hands. Thank you for unknowingly saving my life like that. No People sound like a band I would like to bounce around to while I'm drunk. Fun, basic, bouncy. They have a keyboard player too. —Rene Navarro (Underground Government)

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**GOLDEN: Self-titled: LP**

I think for some *Razorcake* readers out there, all I'd have to say is "from Japan" and "colored vinyl!" and that'd be enough. But I'll go crazy and talk a little bit about the music, too. Musically, this combines bits of Meat Puppets twang, Camper Van Beethoven ramshackle, and Butthole Surfers freakouts with lyrics sung in Japanese and (kindly) translated into English on the liner notes. A potpourri of sonic sensations is found on the record, as some nice melodies and creative instrumentation (mandolin, banjo, and accordion are sprinkled throughout) find themselves interspersed between some intense and heavy blasts of fuzzed-out noise. Well worth a listen. —Jeff Proctor (Tsurumi)

**GOODNIGHT LOVING: Nothing Conquers Us: 7"**

Two tunes that sound like they've been transported straight outta 1966 psych pop land, more in line with Vox Records than Budget Rock. Rodney Bingenheimer would've been peeing his pants with glee over this thirty years ago. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap, dirtnaprecs.com)

**GUILTY FACES: Domestic Bliss: LP**

Whoa dudes, this is some seriously snotty, bratty punk rock. These Boston kids sound like they spend their spare time skating empty pools, jamming to a soundtrack of Minor Threat, Circle Jerks, JFA, and the Zero Boys. An authentic take on early '80s American punk, without sounding cartoonish,

clichéd, or revisionist, it sounds exactly like it should sound: like bored, angry kids finding a way to create their own fun. Equally tough and catchy, the songs know when to end, they don't drag on too long, and the solos are always tasteful and appropriately placed. The album artwork is really colorful and eye catching, too. Overall, this is a supremely solid debut by the Guilty Faces. —Jeff Proctor (Deranged)

**GUMBI: Ritual: 7" EP**

Four tracks of sludgy skronk rock. Better than some, but definitely one o' them discs you gotta be in the right mood for or it'll fuck up yer day and, well, put you in a mood perfect for listening to it. Fuckers. —Jimmy Alvarado (Repulsion)

**HADITUPTOHERES, THE: Wild City Honest Dancing: 12"**

The lyrics aren't as good as the music, and I'm not saying the music is amazing. The bass player is fucking rad. Easy to remember as a fun sound, but no songs that really stand out. It's almost like a slowed down, less energetic Le Shok, which is not really my thing (This, not Le Shok, which fucking rules). Cool to listen to while your cleaning your room. —Rene Navarro (Salinas)

**HEARTBEEPS: Self-titled: 7"**

Every tune has its share of blues guitar soloing, akin to what The Briefs do in their songs. There's not a down tempo tune out any of these songs. Everything is solid, up beat, and in-your-face,

layered with heavy, distorted guitar tones washed in plenty of fuzz. Every tune here has a classic rock feel and reminds me of something Mooney Suzuki would write if they sped up their songs and added layers of grit and attitude. Not a bad song here, but my favorite is their Love cover, "My Flash on You." It starts out with a sloppily strummed acoustic guitar, making me think it was going to be a complete change of direction, but then the tune just swells up into the raging punk that these guys play. I'm very happy pogo-ing to this record. The way they captured their energy on this record, I'm sure I'd feel the same about their live show. —N.L. Dewart (Frantic City)

**HEAVY GUERRILLA: Pariah Time: 7"**

The music is more or less straightforward, by-the-numbers hardcore, but I'm just not diggin' the singer's delivery. No real surprises here, but I imagine they'd probably be more impressive feeding off the energy of a live setting. —Jimmy Alvarado (Pass Line)

**HERE COMES A BIG BLACK CLOUD: Party Vietnam: 10"**

Lo-fi trashy frat rock with junk yard drums and vocals that sound like they were sung into a coffee can with a string. The real winner is the organist who keeps this monster mash going with upbeat and peppy keys that playfully evoke spooky sounds. For fans of Nobunny and other assorted desert

fried rock and roll abnormalities. —Jeff Proctor (Hovercraft)

**HÖLLEY 750: Prison Rules: CD**

Denver's Hölley 750 plays brutal bar punk. Not a joke band per se, but with tongue planted firmly in cheek, they proceed rough and tumble style. They're kind of like the legendary Kansas-based Confederacy of Scum band Cocknoose, replacing the country influence with a dash of metallic hardcore. There's a lot to like on *Prison Rules*, including the surprisingly clever fantasy lyrics about drugs, crime, and sleazy women. See them play at a venue that allows smoking for full effect. —Art Ettinger (Zodiac Killer, zodiackillerrecords.com)

**HOLLY AND THE NON-ITALIANS: Self-titled: CD**

I will admit that from the hand-drawn cover of this CD (featuring a painting of Emma Goldman) I'd pegged this as folksy right away. But the first track kicks in with solid guitars and drums and it knocked me for a bit of a loop. A good loop. And, thankfully, this avoids the dreaded, boring female singer-songwriter curse. As the album goes on, things get a little folkier, but in a catchy, feisty way that I really dig. This album has guts. Surprising and cool. I feel like a preteen girl who just discovered her babysitter playing awesome songs with her friends in her garage. —Jennifer Whiteford (Self-released)



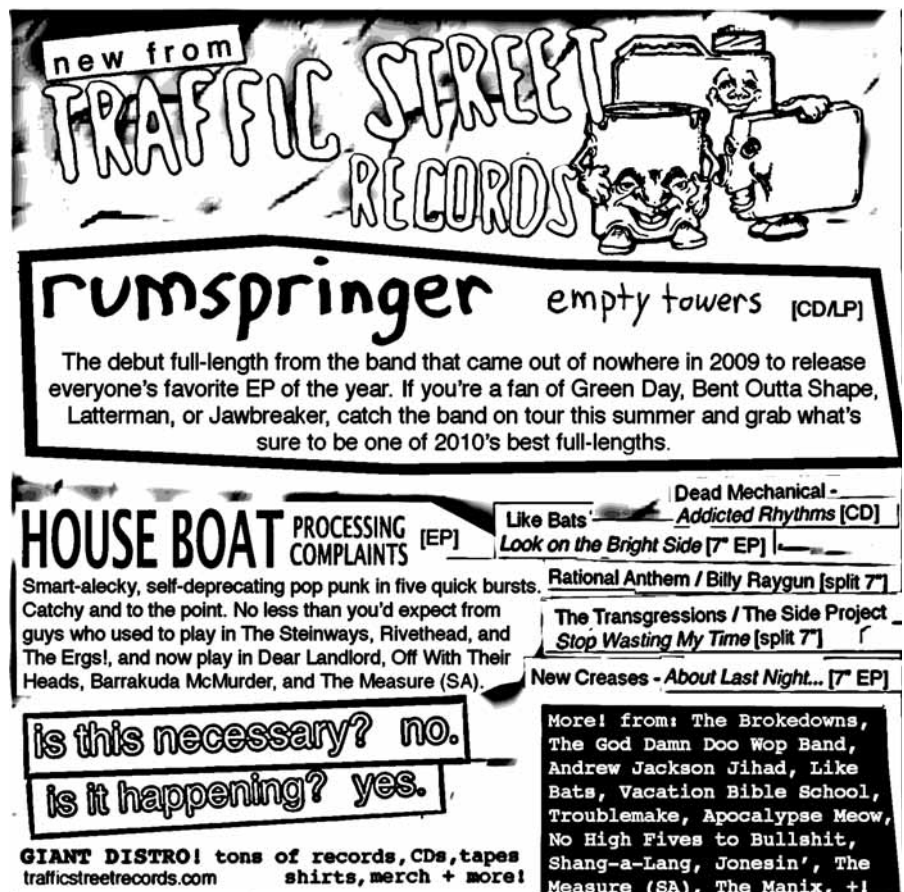
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#### HOLOPAW:

##### **Oh, Glory. Oh, Wilderness.: LP**

Despite the fact that this band has been around for a while, this LP is the first that I had ever heard of them. If their earlier efforts were similar to this one, I'm pretty sure I know why I hadn't heard of 'em; they play well-crafted sad bastard music. There's nothing wrong with that. I like some sad bastard shit, but my inner bastard hasn't been too sad lately. —Vincent (Obscurist Press)

##### **HOMOSTUPIDS: Night Deacon E.P.: 7"**

Like a Supercharger with slightly artier tendencies or a sparser Baseball Furies, Homostupids keep it together by falling apart. Having seen more than my fair share of absolute messes of bands, it's a difficult feat to be this simple and scholastic without the music rolling into an unlistenable turd. If broken is the new fixed or if there was ever an anti-douche inoculation shot to get before setting foot into Guitar Center... go, Homostupids! —Todd (Fashionable Idiots)

##### **HORRIBLY WRONG, THE: C'mon and Bleed with the Horribly Wrong: LP**

Fucking awesome. The Horribly Wrong play dirty, trashy, sloppy, beer-spilling, blood-soaked rock'n'roll in the tradition of the Invisible Men or the Mummies. About as lousily perfect as you can get. An excellent soundtrack for the Keg Party of Doom and its requisite reckless abandonment. This record is about as low-fi as they come, and it drips with rock'n'roll sincerity as a result. If you're

into this sound, this one should not be missed; may the fleas of 10,000 camels infest your armpits if you do. And it's on 180-gram vinyl! You can emotionally and physically maim people with this record! And there's a free digital download card included (at least in the copy I was sent), so failure to own a turntable is not a viable excuse for not adding this record to your weekend drinking plans. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Eradicator / Shit In Can)

##### **HYPERNOVA: Through the Chaos: CD**

Disposable version of a band who sounds like Interpol, Franz Ferdinand, She Wants Revenge, and the Killers. There's absolutely no need for this to ever exist. Simulacra. —M.Avrq (Narnack, narnackrecords.com)

##### **IMPEDIMENTS, THE:**

###### **Self-titled: Cassette**

Burger has a solid roster of cassette-only releases featuring punk, psych, and rock bands working riffs from previous eras. The Impediments play straight from the rock and roll guitar handbook with a bit of Rose Tattoo speed thrown in intermittently. The recording is really big; I would like to hear them a little more raw, but there is some full-on riffage, including a bass player who does good runs. Good rock and roll bass playing is always a winner with me. The range is pretty minimal; the scope being mid-tempo bouncers like "Junk," to fast-paced riff rock with furious piano chords, like the album opener "LeAnn Stoned." The song is about hanging

out with LeAnn Rimes. Curse them for making me look up how to spell her last name. Praise them for rock and roll. —Billups Allen (Burger)

##### **IN DEFENCE / PARTY BY THE SLICE:**

###### **Split: 7"**

Good luck trying to find seven inches of wax with more fun crammed into it than this split between Twin Cities tacolytes In Defence and Milwaukee pizza-eaters Party By The Slice. Which band delivers the most fun? On "Bromophobia," In Defence offers this line: "You're just a boy with a cheesy mustache, Wanda Sykes is going to kick your ass." On the flipside, Party By The Slice pairs the classic line from Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* "When there's no room left in hell, the dead will walk the earth" with "By the time they make it to the lunchroom, they'll get their just desserts." When you're talking zombies, you're talking my language. —MP Johnson (Berzerker / Crash Assailant / Goodtimes / Insulin Addicted)

##### **INJUSTICE SYSTEM:**

###### **Self-titled: Cassette**

Quick little four-songer. Spray painted tape face, xeroxed cover, and about five minutes of well done, frantic '80s-era hardcore. It all sounds pretty authentic, so if you're a fan of Gloom or 625 stuff, keep your eyes out for these dudes. —Keith Rosson (Injustice System)

#### INTERNATIONAL PLAYBOYS:

##### **Hymns of the Flesh: CD**

Psychedelic garage with heavy organs and reverberation; an Australian version of Electric 6. Low on the white noise with smooth vocals. —Jessica T (I-94 Bar, i94barrecords.com)

##### **JAIL: There's No Sky (Oh My My): Cassette**

I was thinking of using the word "jangly" to describe this band, but I wasn't sure, so I asked a friend of mine what he thought they sounded like. The first word out of his mouth? "Jangly." So, there you go. Jangly indie pop, pretty catchy, the sort of thing that a friend might play during a long road trip, and by the time we reached our destination, I'd be pretty into it. Also, under the "probably unrelated side note" category, it appears that all four members of this band have moustaches. If this were a cereal, it'd be Apple Jacks. You wouldn't think to purchase it, but if your friend has some, you eat it, and it's actually pretty good. —Maddy (Burger)

##### **JIZZ KIDS, THE / THE GUTS:**

###### **A Safe Return to the Forest: Split: 7"**

Jizz Kids: standard punk rock. It's good, but not because it's original. The Jizz Kids are musical comfort food for me: a rockin' beat with buzzsaw guitars, aggressive lyrics, and a snotty attitude. The Guts: pretty much the same. In fact, apart from the vocalist, the sound is pretty much the same for both of these bands and they could easily be mistaken for one another. The only real difference

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is that the Guts have a more melodic sound that seems more obviously influenced by the Queers' bubblegum punk tunes. The Jizz Kids, on the other hand, seem more influenced by the Queers' "fuck you" songs. Good record, but not great. Blue vinyl! —The Lord Kveldulfr (Knowhere / No Breaks)

**JUVENESCENT BEAT: *One Day We're Gonna Fall through This Roof*: LP**

First things first: the first song sounds eerily like Altaira, right down to the vocals. I mean this guy is a dead ringer for Tampa J Wang. Weird, really weird. The rest of the record takes on more of an Embrace / One Last Wish / Rites Of Spring *All Through a Life* EP sound. Clean guitar lines, vocals with a heavy conscience, and a tight and precise rhythm section successfully pounding out complex grooves. These guys clearly live on a musical diet rich in Revolution Summer and they represent that sound very well. For those waving banners that read "emo's not dead," this is the record for you. —Jeff Proctor (Ghidorah, myspace.com/ghidorahrecords)

**KILL DEVILLE: *Self-titled*: CD**

New old school SoCal speed thrash punk a la D.R.I., although I hear a little Dag Nasty et al in there, too. Very good if you like that sort of thing. —Jessica T (Malt Soda, maltsoda.com)

**KILLED BY THE BULL: *Failing is Fun*: LP**

This is hardly tolerable experimental punk. These songs crescendo and

decrescendo a lot, which is a nice way of saying the music is dynamic at least. If I were grading this album, I'd give it an A for effort and a U for unlistenable. Yuck. —N.L. Dewart (Koi, koirecords.com)

**KINGS OF NUTHIN': *Old Habits Die Hard*: CD**

This record was recorded over two years ago but the label's PR company is trying to pass this off as a brand new record. The band maintains their signature "punk rock, rhythm and blues" style that mixes '77-'82 style punk rock with a horn section and swing beats. The vocals are still very, very Boston and my friends always ask me if this the new band "from the Mighty Mighty Bosstones guy." The songs on this record are a lot better than *Over the Counter Culture* (which was mostly covers, anyway). The production is pretty slick compared to the raw sound on *Fight Songs* and *Get Busy Livin...*, but it actually works for most of these songs. "The List" is a great anti-industry rant that's perfect for mix tapes, and the album's closer "Congratulations" is a surprisingly well-written ballad. This is a solid comeback record and is definitely the best thing they've released since their early days. —Ian Wise (Sailor's Grave, sailorsgraverecords.com)

**KNIVES: *Demo*: CD**

Five songs of circle-pit-ready, four-chord hardcore punk. Nice in-your-face recording. I could see these folks fitting into the suburban D.C. scene of the

mid-'90s or suburban L.A. in the early '80s. Honestly, while Knives rock, they aren't terribly original, and could fit in anywhere. Sometimes, the best way to judge a demo is to ask yourself, "Would this make for a good 7?" In this case, the answer is "Yes." So bring it on, y'all. —CT Terry (Flat Black)

**KRAYONS, THE: *Hindsight Is 20/20*: CD**

**WARNING:** The following review contains no jokes about or relating to The Ergs. This is a retrospective of sorts from a band that existed in Corpus Christi, TX during the late '80s and early '90s. I am not sure who the hell's been sitting on this, but this is a killer fucking record. It makes me think this is what Kid Dynamite would have sounded like in '80s. The songs do sound slightly dated, but I think that's okay if they were recorded twenty years ago. The biggest problem with the record is that, as far as I can tell, the songs are laid out in no particular order, so you get some really weirdly recorded stuff smack dab in the middle of the record. Really, though, that's making skinheads out of skin flakes and it's not that big a deal. Recommended. —Bryan Static (TFC, tfc-records.com)

**KRAYONS: *Damn Bonus Disc*: CD**

From the first song, Krayons instantly remind me of a couple of my favorite bands from the San Diego area: Fluf and Tiltwheel. Sweet and chubby riffs and rollicking rides over songs hammered together with equal parts

care and disdain. Well, like I said, Krayons remind me of those bands. Not as good as either of them, but still really enjoyable. By the third song, things change up to more of a straight up scrappy punk thing that is different, but also good... Now a poppier, Descendentsier song. The vocals are very Dave Smalley-like. These guys are all over the place, but I'm liking all of it. It seems that they've been around in one form or another since 1987. I think this may be some kind of brief retrospective, but there is very little information to go on. After a little internet digging, I've found out that this disc is the "bonus" disc that went along with their retrospective *Hindsight Is 20/20*. I'll have to get that now. —Ty Stranglehold (TFC, tfc-records.com)

**KREAMY 'LECTRIC SANTA: *Operation Spacetime Cynderblock: "Four Riddles of the Spheres"*: LP/CD**

There are times for expansion and there are times for contraction. KLS vibrate. Expand. Contract. Expand. Contract. The reference points are far-flung: Sun Ra, a near death spinal injury, Roky Erikson, broken glass, Crass, experiments with space and time, Smegma, violins, Bongwater, splattered paint, Hickey, rainbows inside of gasoline on water, The Creation, Eastern religions, and Shellshag. Art and aesthetics are personal choices. For music, I always think back to a sage fat man's chest—"How much art can you take?"—for guidance. It's no secret that bad art is an easy escape for the lazy and pretentious. But the continued

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vision to explode a microcosm into a self-populating universe; that takes serious misfit guts and long-term determination beyond the tried-and-true initial impulses of ego and negation (i.e. me rad, you suck.). Although I won't find myself listening to KLS on a regular basis (they're more of a sipping whiskey than a nightly beer run), I do find comfort that they exist and are pushing their boundaries and giving shape to what before was mere darkness. And when they're visiting musical lands where I'm the most comfortable, they absolutely nail sweeping pop melodies and DIY punk with scary clarity and ease. Expand and contract. Expand. Contract. —Todd (Starcleaner, starcleaner.com)

#### KVOTERINGEN / NITAD: Split: 7"

The lynchpin for these two Swedish bands is Motörhead, and in the parts where Lemmy and Co. would go noodly and Fast Eddie would get fret-happy, replace those bits with Minor Threat, Slayer, dark skies, and D-beats. Due to America's crumbling educational system, this is a short lesson in Swedish. (Prior to this, all I knew was the Swedish Chef, Swedish Fish, and Swedish meatballs; and figuring I'm a fan of all three, why not?) Kvoterigen ("quota expansion and financing" if split to its roots of "Kvot" and "Teringen") is from Örebro. They share members with both Millencolin and Totalitär ("totalitarian"), and, appropriately, sound like the middle ground between the two, with Motörhead ("badass

rock'n'roll") thrown in. Song titles—Vi Har Fått Nog ("We've Had Enough"), Allt å Alla ("Everything at All")—cue you into their head space. Stockholm's Nitad ("Riveted") ratchet up the energy with their two rippers: Digitala Ögon ("Digital Eye") and "Riv Ner" ("Tear Down"). It's close, but I'm liking the Nitad side just a little bit more. There's just more oomph. Utmärkta resultat. ("Excellent record.") —Todd (Kranium, krmn.se)

#### LEATHERFACE: *The Stormy Petrel*: CD

This late in the game—their eighth full length—I'm far beyond the honeymoon stage with Leatherface. They'll never be new to me again. I knew almost exactly what *The Stormy Petrel* would sound like before I played the first song: burlap and cold concrete, smoke bristling; songs that have shape but when you try to capture them, they wisp around your fingers and soak into the furniture. Simultaneously everywhere and nowhere. I knew I'd be seduced by Frankie Stubbs's lyrics and Dickie Hammond's string work. And although I've never been to Leatherface's hometown of Sunderland, England, I'm intimate with aching towns of failing industry, of large ports of amazing complexity, of countries simultaneously capable of extreme compassion and viciousness. I can hear that world through Leatherface. With *The Stormy Petrel*, there are no huge surprises for longtime listeners, yet, at the same time, it's a distinctly new experience.

Leatherface writes novels of songs, not just records. Although longtime listeners may know all the characters, the scenery, and the plot, Leatherface has the knack of being true to their time and place without "Bad Religion-ing" themselves by making the same record again and again (topically or sound-gimmick wise). It's far-ranging in topic (the opening line is "God is dead, in my shed," terrorism, heart infarctions from ice cream, heart break, depression, murder fantasies, and a plea for the listener to never give up hope (or watch *Home Alone*)). Paradoxically, *The Stormy Petrel* is also an excellent, accessible record for listeners new to the band. My advice? You have to come to Leatherface. Let the record spin over and over. Even if it doesn't lock in, keep on spinning it, even six months down the line. It's not uncommon that it'll take some time. But when the dime drops... pure magic. Uncontested top ten of 2010 for me. —Todd (Big Ugly Fish, biguglyfish.uk, Leatherface.biz)

#### LEGION / FINGERS CROSSED:

##### *Sign of the Southern Cross: 7"*

This is Legion's second split release in just a couple of months, and these tracks are from the same session of their split with Mammoth Grinder. The production is the same, but the mastering on this slab of wax sounds a little burlier than their last release. The tracks are still heavy on the Integrity influence, but have a little more range on the slower, sludgy parts. Some of it sounds like Iron Monkey

and some of it has more of a Southern edge like old Buzzov-en. The lyrics on this release are top notch, especially on the opener "No Faith." Fingers Crossed are a little less interesting but sound a lot like old Dark Empire Records/Clevo style hardcore. "Pressing Matters" has a pretty awesome breakdown midway through the song that is a good turn from their straightforward metalcore style, and gets a little moshy towards the end. Solid release from two southern bands. —Ian Wise (Dead End, myspace.com/deadendrecordsjc)

#### LIGHT RAYS, THE: *Self-titled*: Cassette

Ultra lo-fi and DIY, five songs on cassette with hand-screened covers. Precious little info about the band here, no liner notes, no song titles. But, what you do get are some really catchy garage pop ditties. Reminiscent of the playful, frolicking of Beat Happening: slack drums, a little bit of a Cramps wiggle to the guitar, unsure vocals. The songs are certainly a lot of fun, though it's over awfully quick. And I imagine I would listen to this a lot more if it weren't released on the worst format possible. Hopefully, the clandestine Light Rays can get it together to release some more material in the near future. —Jeff Proctor (Sun Fight)

#### LIKE BATS: *Look on the Bright Side: 7"*

There are several things I am known for doing—and listening to a 7" four times before writing a review about it is not one of them. I am more than willing to admit that that was not the

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case with this EP. Have you ever been angry at a record because there weren't enough songs? This is easily the best 7" I have heard in the last few months and I want more, god dammit. Like Bats are a three-piece who come together to bring us some choice cuts of Midwest gruff punk with equal elements of Dear Landlord and For Science. Traffic Street Records, I am not sure where the hell you are finding these bands, but please keep going there. —Bryan Static (Traffic Street, [trafficroadrecords.com](http://trafficroadrecords.com))

#### **LIMBS BIN: Demo & Live: CD-R**

Why, look here, boys. We got ourselves one-a them one-man *noise bands*. You like what you do, boy? You like hollerin' and making all-a that goddamned racket with your, what's that thing called? Little Jimmy, get me that piece of paper that came with this feller's music... Ah, there it is, your Zoom Rhythm Trak 323. The hell is that, boy? One-a them samplers or something? Back in my day we played with *bands*, son. You got shitfaced with your buddies, forgot all the parts to the songs right before you played but still managed to have a good time because nobody gave a shit anyway. You, you sound like you're wallerin' around in broken glass while your little Rhythm Trak makes a bunch-a bleeps and goddamn bleeps behind you. Ain't how we do it here, feller. You look like a decent kid and all that, but those is the rules. So finish drinking your pop there, take your CD-R in your manila envelope and hit the highway. I mean it.

I see you here tomorrow I'm teaching you a bar chord, god damn it. —Keith Rosson (Limbs Bin)

#### **LITTLE LUNGS: Living Hell: 7"EP**

When it was happening in real time, I didn't spend a lot of time with K Records or Kill Rock Stars in the late '90s. But, over time, and with great suggestions, I've been able to retroactively cherry pick some great stuff that seemed either too sweater-vest-precious, overly hyped, or fragile at the time. And it sounds like Little Lungs has (conceptually) done the same. They sound like a contemporary, punk-spirited band reshaping the candy glass pieces of early Sleater Kinney, Tender Trap, perhaps some of the slower, bubbling bits of Bikini Kill. Think melodies, smarts, and bites that won't break the skin; from former members of Cheeky and The Latterman. Not bad. Not bad. —Todd (Salinas)

#### **LOADED NUNS, THE: Self-titled: CD**

Once I was able to get past the truly appalling cover art, I realized there is a really good band here. Straight ahead, no-bullshit punk rock. Think The Heartbreakers with Cheetah Chrome on guest guitar. But the gritty vocals of Mayo Baltimore (who at times sounds like SOA-era Rollins) propels this band above the pretenders to the throne. Now if they could convince their labelmates The Living Wrecks to reform, I would pay at least ten bucks to see a double bill tour by these two rabble rousers. —Sean Koepenick (Zodiac Killer)

#### **LOVE COLLECTOR:**

##### ***My Baby Goes Waaah!: 7"***

Hyper garage punk meets power pop! Yay! I could see this band being on a split with the Marked Men. I could also see myself playing this record at the annual Punk Rock Dance Massacre (an annual Valentine's Day themed dance party in Minneapolis)! If this were a cereal, it'd be Trix! If you hear this and don't want to dance, you are lame! —Maddy (Big Action)

#### **MAD TRUCKER GONE MAD:**

##### **Self-titled: CD**

Driving (no pun intended) power punk with a moderated psychobilly and hillbilly bent. Strong choruses, crisp musicianship. Hailing from Wisconsin, it makes sense that I hear the faintest traces of Rust Belt bellwethers like Chicago's Three Blue Teardrops and Detroit's Elvis Hitler. Pat Moriarity art. —Jessica T (Crustacean)

#### **MANIPULATION: Self-titled: 7"**

Five galloping, rampaging, crusty hardcore blasters from some super-old people in Chicago. I tend to think of hardcore as the domain of people ages roughly sixteen to twenty-four, but, lately, a lot of the stuff I've been liking is played by rockers who are twice that age. Case in point: Manipulation. At least sixty percent of this band is over the age of thirty, and they're still *so pissed*. It's awesome, because I'm pissed too! For those of you keeping score, this band features Jordan from The Pedestrians, Bryan from Chronic

Seizure and Waffle Annie from This Is My Fist. —CT Terry (Fashionable Idiots, [fashionableidiots.com](http://fashionableidiots.com))

#### **MANIX, THE: Van Activities: 7"EP**

In this post-Rivethead / Banner Pilot, Dear Landlord-ascending world with the Dopamines peeking over the cinder block wall like Kilroy, The Copyrights' show the previous night still ringing in the air, and Jesse Thorson driving the van telling them of all the things they're doing poorly, The Manix Minneapolis-icity/Midwestern pop punk-isms are undeniable. They play ball bearing tight with no irony in sight: songs about the simple life and the nine-to-five version of death that so many Americans punch themselves in the face with every day. The dividing line between "Yeah, it's all right" and "Flip it over. Play it again," in pop punk is the thinnest of lines if you've been listening to it for more than five years. The Manix have both the compressed "we're in it together" feeling and that electrical spark that keeps on zapping through all four songs. Well played. —Todd (Whoah Oh, [whoahrecords.com](http://whoahrecords.com))

#### **MARKED MEN / THIS IS MY FIST: Split: 7"**

This Is My Fist: Gave these kids a spin 'cause, let's be honest here, they're working at a severe disadvantage being coupled with the band on the flip of this and I wanna give 'em the fair shake they deserve. "All That Is Wrong" is a nice'n'solid, catchy bit of punky pop. "Bad Seed" starts off at a gallop

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then slows things down a bit midway through, with a structure a bit more complex than most. Can't remember if I've paid much attention to 'em before, but plan to do so in the future 'cause this is some good stuff. Marked Men: At this point I seriously wonder if there's any praise left for these guys that hasn't already been heaped on them. If you happen to be one of the three people on the planet that has yet to hear 'em, they specialize in a brand of frantic pop that sounds butt simple until you either try to play it yourself or really pay attention to what's going on and find the treasure trove of obscene hooks buried deep into every note. Two tunes this time 'round, short, to the point, and so catchy you almost wanna beat 'em up for being *too* goddamned good. I once proclaimed 'em god, and this doesn't sway that opinion one iota. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Idea)

**MARVELOUS DARLINGS: "Teenage Targets" b/w "Lagoons": 7"**

(The following is inspired by the atomic testing photos on the b-side of the 7".) In 1956, Howard Hughes produced a movie with John Wayne playing Genghis Kahn called *The Conqueror*. Huge-ass budget. Big-ass stars. Rich-ass dudes. Think of this movie as the major record industry, 2007. They had everything going for them, but the movie was a dismal, almost unwatchable failure run by people who believed they controlled the universe. The Marvelous Darlings

are the antithesis of that. They're a small band, hugely talented, that have fused power pop and glam seamlessly; this time reminiscent of the warm smolder of early Kinks. *The Conqueror* was filmed in St. George, Utah, downwind from another group of people who believed they controlled the universe: the United States government. The deleterious effects of Operation Upshot-Knothole's above-ground nuclear testing would go on to infect a little under half the cast and crew of *The Conqueror* who contracted violent, aggressive forms of cancer via radioactive dust that fell all around them during the filming. (They also carted tons of the dirt back to the studio for close-ups.) So ask yourself this. You wanna give a second listen to the forms of mega powers that'll kill you (large corporations, stupid large-stage bands, "officials"), or do you want to do your own diggin' for audio gold in your own mine? Marvelous Darlings deserve your attention, as does Plastic Idol Records. —Todd (Plastic Idol, plasticidolrecords.com)

**MDC / RESTARTS: Split LP**

MDC: Nothing tops the *Millions of Dead Cops* LP for me. That record is as equally powerful today as it was when I first heard it when it came out. Only the *Multi-Death Corporations 7"* came close. I have to admit that everything afterwards has just been okay with me. This, surprisingly, sounds real good to me: charging punk rock that they basically wrote

the instruction book on. The only thing I wish is that the guitar sounded heavier. They are a bit clean for my liking. I would put this as number three on my list for their output. Restarts: I tend to favor this side of the record from these U.K. punks. This side definitely got more repeat listens. I remember first hearing them off their *System Error* CD that Havoc Records put out awhile back. UK82 meets today without sounding like a carbon copy. They continue that tradition and what stands out for me is that they still know how to carry a melody. They play songs that are catchy and infectious, yet still know when to put forth some aggression. This side gets my beer-raised salute. Overall, a good release. I did like the record nerd touch of the vinyl being split brown and white, matching the color scheme of the cover. —Donofthedeath (Rodent Popsicle)

**MESS FOLK: "Something I Remember": 7"**

Great single. I can always depend on HoZac to deliver great, trippy punk rock with their roster of The Functional Blackouts, Wizzard Sleeve, Woven Bones, Blank Dogs, et al. And, sure enough, Mess Folk fit right in, as they tightrope walk the fine line of weird punk, combining meandering drone-y vibes with really tight corners and sharp edges. They have a messy feel, like each member is working out their own take of the song with singing washing over it all, and it really works. Phillip Tarr is

the mastermind of the band, starting it as a solo project that has morphed into this group. Mess Folk hails from Sydney, Nova Scotia, appropriately known for toxic waste dumping. Canada breeds some great punk, but Nova Scotia grows a special strain of noise. —Speedway Randy (HoZac)

**MICKY: "She's So Crazy": 7"**

From the grimy north side streets of Chicago comes Mickey, a ramshackle five-piece rock'n'roll band who deliver a swaggering blast of glittery gutter glam and an earnest "this is who I am, warts and all" ballad. "She's So Crazy" is damn near perfect: a maddeningly catchy guitar hook, bouncy bass line, superb drumming, and vocals, a la Mac Blackout, that sound far crazier than the accused "She" in the title. The desperate obsession of the chorus seems to indicate that maybe, just maybe, the singer is projecting his insanity onto his object of desire: "and when she walks in the room/I go into a trance/if she would just give my love/just give my love one chance/but I ain't stakin' and I ain't stuck on you." What does stick is this tune. In your head. For weeks. The B side, "I Am Your Trash, I Am Your Man," sways along sweetly while the lyrics detail the heel-like behavior of the singer. He talks about drinking, getting into it with his girl, being rotten and not understanding why she loves him, finally exploding with the defiant proclamation "I am your

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trash/I am your man.” A touchingly menacing masterpiece. —Josh Benke (Horizontal Action)

#### MIGHTY HIGH: *Drops a Deuce: 7"*

Surprisingly rockin' and muscular for a band that professes such love of marijuana. The A side, "Cable TV Eye," is a solid rocker, and the B side, "Hands Up!" is a live track that's live in the sense that Kiss's *Alive II* (or was it *Alive*?) was live. Musically (and artistically, for that matter, looking at Bjerke's cover art), this record is like the art of Robert Crumb meets that of Peter Bagge: groovy '60s psychosis meets a hard-edged '80s and '90s aggression. I liked it. —The Lord Kveludulfr (Mighty High / Mint Deluxe)

#### MINDS, THE: *Knifed: 7" EP*

What a difference five or so years make. Half a decade ago, it was a three-way sprint between the Epoxies, Briefs, and Spits to the swirling vortex of the middle of my record player's spindle. The Minds were that perfect vanilla/chocolate/Crustie-O's swirl of the Epoxies' ray-gun synthesizers, Spits' fiery, fungusy snot, and Briefs' duffle bag of tight-fitting hooks. When punk was beating up new wave, then putting its arm around it, giving it a too-close hug, then taking another close punch. Well, Cerra Bella Palsey, Bobby Brains, The Cortex, The Thinker, and one of my favorite bashers Mikey Mind (aka Bloodbath and Beyond's Mikey Napkin) haven't mellowed, haven't tamed any demons,

and come out like a Moog on fire while casting sharp-hooked lures into the eyeballs of their audience... and that's a supreme compliment. (If you can find it, The Minds *Plastic Girls* full length is well worth your time.) —Todd (Plastic Idol)

#### MK ULTRA: *Discography: 2xLP*

MK Ultra existed pretty much all through the '90s and released a series of splits and songs on compilations before calling it quits in the early 2000s. The band might not get the attention and reverence of their Chicago peers Charles Bronson and Los Crudos—and MK Ultra were admittedly less prolific than both—but they were at least as good as either. And for the time being, they're the only band of the three that now has a proper "best of" properly committed to vinyl. This is an epic fifty-five songs, plus a live set from the Fireside Bowl that's spread across two LPs. The songs are arranged in reverse chronological order, so you get to hear the band dissolve from the straightforward Chicago hardcore of the late '90s (with Ebro of Bronson/Crudos fame on the drums) to the early days of heavier, Born Against-inspired hardcore with their original drummer. I liked the older stuff better, but that's just me. The packaging is excellent and comes with a massive pro-printed book that reprints a good bit of the artwork and lyrics from the records as they were originally issued. —Ian Wise (Youth Attack, ihatemyouthattack.com)

#### MODERN ACTION: *Self-titled: 7"*

##### MODERN ACTION: *Radioactive Boy: 7"*

Another thing to thank punk rock for: its stubborn refusal to let the seven-inch single/EP format go the way of eight track tapes. The strength of the medium is that each release ostensibly forces a band to plop down at least one of their A-grade tracks for a given release if they have any desire for anyone outside their immediate group of friends to pay any attention to 'em. The most memorable singles often had two A-grade tracks, and it appears this is a tradition Modern Action has paid close attention to not once, but on both of its first two singles. Four tracks of choice punk rock here, tight and wicked catchy, and though it's clear they could've fit a couple more tunes on the second single given its brevity, they've wisely left listeners barely sated and hoping they don't break up or fuck off for a couple of decades before dropping release number three into their laps. —Jimmy Alvarado (Modern Action)

#### MOJOMATICS, THE:

##### *Another Cheat on Me: 7"*

"Another Cheat on Me" is a nice garage rock stomper that'd make Jack White shake in his boots with envy, while "Down by the Graveyard" has a bit more of a country feel to it. Nice bit of diversity in evidence while still keeping things close enough sonically that one sounds like a natural progression to the other. —Jimmy Alvarado (Douchemaster)

#### MONOTONIX: *Where Were You When It Happened?: CD*

I caught this Israeli three-piece at the Knockout in San Francisco with Triclops! over Thanksgiving weekend about two years ago and was impressed by the wild man antics and stage show put on by the nearly naked, hirsute, and mustachioed front man, Ami Shalev. Singing atop the bar, pouring candle wax into his underpants, shooting fireworks out of his ass, it was certainly a sight to see. Didn't actually remember much what they sounded like before picking up this here CD out of the review pile at HQ. What we have here is sort of a missing link between the doom and sludge of later Flag albums like *Loose Nut* or *Slip it In*, the head banging lumberjack big fuzz of Mudhoney's "Touch Me I'm Sick," and Nirvana's *Bleach*: sharp blasts of rip roaring rock and roll interspersed with heavy jams that trudge along like clockwork. And for a band with no bassist, there is some serious groove to these tunes. As well, they do a nice job of filling out the sound; no emptiness or hollowness to the recordings. Definitely a band worth seeing live. And when they come to town, pick up this record. It's worth your hard-earned dollars. —Jeff Proctor (Drag City)

#### MYELIN SHEATHS: *Self-titled: 7" EP*

Wow, they sure ain't afraid to cover a lotta ground. On the four songs here, they manage to touch bases in trash rock, art-damaged sludge rock, girl group fodder, and even throw in a moody,

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surf instrumental for good measure. Mighty impressive and pretty danged good. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bachelor)

#### NATURE BOYS: Self-titled: CDEP

Lo-fi, muddy, and raw, this demo sounds like it was recorded in abandoned factory. "Scary Larry" will keep you up at night for many moons. But somewhere along the way I got lost. This shows promise, but I need more cash up front gentlemen (and miss!). I would like to know where you got these kick ass CD-Rs that look like vinyl on the back. —Sean Koeppenick (Self-released)

#### NERVOUS SYSTEMS: Needs Medicines: LP

This sounds like something I would have heard in the late '80s, early '90s. Very much like something you would hear on Slumberland Records. Nervous Systems have a sound that's a mix of post punk with synths, indie rock, and shoegazer music. There's a familiarity about the sound, though I can't point to any direct influence. The keyboards have a cold tone that floats and hangs in the air. The guitars hammer and churn; at other times they sound forlorn. The vocals took a couple listens to get used to. But the music is really good and has enough of a dark atmosphere for this to work properly and keep me listening the whole way through. "Sleeping Arrangements" is the definite standout song on here. The vocals sound very similar to Bernard Sumner, the music is slightly darker, and the lyrics about

letting go are the best of the bunch. "Mains Hum" is a strong contender as well. These two songs would have made for a spectacular single. —M.Avrq (Obscurist Press, obscuristpress.com)

#### NEW MEXICO, THE: Inductive Reasoning: CDEP

Hell yeah to The New Mexico's ability to spit out five songs in a little more than eight minutes. They actually could have skinned the fat off of their first song that has a 45 second intro of drums and then guitar following the drum beat. The highlight of this CD is the tune "Benjamin's Cause," where these guys splice a few seconds of radio friendly buttrock as an introduction and then the tune emerges with a pulled needle sound, then The New Mexico slam into their hardcore diatribe against such poser music. These guys know how to flawlessly lock their guitars in step with the drums to deliver some four chord punk. They sound like there're influenced by the early '80s SoCal punk stuff like Youth Brigade. They've got some high energy, well-played tunes here. —N.L. Dewart (Live Nasty Dynasty, louisvillehardcore.com)

#### NO BUNNY: Raw Romance: Cassette

The introduction to this tape is the scene from *Buffalo 66*, where the dad lets himself get talked into playing his tape, then—boom—the beautiful rock and roll is delivered from No Bunny. Always right on time, always ready to party and blow the roof off a dive bar in Tijuana or a backyard near you. This

definitely shows a lot more early '60s lo-fi rock and roll feel than the earlier ultra-Ramones influenced stuff, yet even the acoustic tracks really carry that strong fun energy. Fun lyrics, fun music, fun fun fun. —Rene Navarro (Burger)

#### NOFX: Cokie the Clown: CDEP

There are five songs on this EP. "Cokie the Clown" is top notch NOFX musically, but has some stupid lyrics about... a drug addict clown. "Straight out of Massachusetts" is a full band reworking of a song Fat Mike did acoustically for the kid's show *Pancake Mountain*. It's all right, but the novelty of the lyrics wear off pretty quick after the first listen. "Fermented and Flailing" and "Codependence Day" are two more rather interchangeable songs where Fat Mike sings about how cool it is to be a drunk and/or drug user. He really needs to stop going to that lyrical well because it's sounding lame at this point. Finally, "My Orphan Year" is an acoustic reworking of the same song from the *Coaster* album. This actually may be the high point of the EP. The lyrics about the year Fat Mike lost both his parents are surprisingly heartfelt and serious, at least as far as NOFX goes. All in all, I would say this is two-and-a-half out of five. —Adrian (Fat)

#### NORTH LINCOLN: Self-titled: 7"

Side A's a barnstormer that would've fit perfectly anywhere in their final full length, *Midwestern Blood*. Side B's got a restrained-then-raucous Gibbons cover (terrific band that also shared an awesome

split 7" with these guys a few years back) and a slow, pensive number that closes things out. That last song really tends to color things with a bit of solemnity to it when you consider that this may be the last thing this now-defunct band ever releases. These guys—especially their later stuff and especially for a three piece—frequently managed to pull off a kind of, I don't know, emo with *muscles*, you know? There were buckets of raw emotion in the music these guys laid down, but it was all wrapped up in a frayed coating of duct tape and peppered with shards of safety glass. I don't know. Great band, pretty good last vinyl outing, if that's what it proves to be. Bummed that I never got to see 'em live. —Keith Rosson (Kiss Of Death)


#### NORTON: Long Walks on Short Piers: LP

Apparently named after the Hüsker's bass player (Greg Norton), this record reminds me less of the Dü and more of some of their contemporary anthemic, hardcore-rooted punk bands like *Scream or 7 Seconds*, only with more gravel voiced vocals reminiscent of Razorcake favorites Davey Quinn or Frankie Stubbs. In any case, this shit grooves and you should check it out. Tremendously eye-catching collage work on the album cover, too. All in all, very well done and very well put together. —Jeff Proctor (Rinderherz)


#### NUX VOMICA: The President Is Dead: 7"

A complimentary release to the CD *Asleep in the Ashes* that came out recently. These two tracks were

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recorded back in 2006, a year earlier than the tracks on the CD. They're a little more raw and direct than the CD: two charging tracks that reek of a dark, apocalyptic environment fueled by a metallic and crust punk backdrop. I appreciate this band even more from seeing them live a few times now. Hearing the band live, you can really experience the moodiness and aggression firsthand. Going back to the recordings, it recaptures those moments of sonic stimulation. This release is more straight forward than their current CD, but they still do capture an underlying melodic element that brings forth the aggression and makes it stimulating to the aural senses. Power and fury, a combination that is undying. The growth of this band keeps me intrigued. There is a split 10" with the Makai out there that I now have to get. —Donofthedeath (Defector)

#### ONION FLAVORED RINGS: *Funny: 7"*

Funny has instantly appealing sing-songy tunes anchored down with the weight of morose lyrics. These tunes' ingenuity captures life's dichotomy of happy and sad. On one hand, Onion Flavored Rings' guitar riffs make me feel super happy and carefree, like I was fourteen years old again and listening to early Green Day for the first time. On the other, scratch just beneath the surface of their sugar high riffs and you'll find things are a bit more serious and not quite as happy as they appear. Take the poignant song, "Gurgle + Coup" about the birth of a child: "For you the flower

of youth is blossoming; 'Scrap Heap of History' for me." It's songwriter, Steve Funyon, musing of how the happiest moments in life are truly the ones that bring the most suffering and frustration. This plays out through the entire EP. In the track "Running Away," the happiness of one lover's freedom is the anguish of the other one's loss as the chorus explains, "You're running away. Now it's your moment: Free from underneath the thumb of torment. And your success now, Is my catastrophe." Musically, the band never seems to seep down into a minor key anywhere. All five tracks come across rocking out—really up beat—like an Egghead or Nerf Herder tune. I don't think any other band possesses the ability to make life's mishaps sound so happy to the Onion Flavored Rings does. This is one 7" worth getting. —N.L. Dewart (Thrillhouse)

#### OVER VERT: *Gagging + Swallowing: Cassette*

Something about the riff and vocal delivery on the track, "The Stranger" reminded me of Nirvana's tune, "Negative Creep." So I examined this tape closer and found out Steve Albini recorded it. (Now I know Albini didn't record Nirvana's song "Negative Creep," but it was a strange coincidence.) In reality, it's hard for me to pin an influence on Over Vert's sound, but it's definitely some thrashy hardcore. It's similar to the band Deep Sleep. Nothing here is played sloppily and everything hits hard, but Over Vert never progresses into sing-a-long pop

choruses. These guys don't rest on their laurels by just pummeling out straight-ahead power chords. Their riffs are always a bit more spaced-out sounding and droning so their tunes wouldn't necessarily appeal to a pop crowd. Their song, "Burning An Eye" does a good job lyrically to describe what these guys and their music is all about: "There is a house with a joyous sound that keeps my ears ringing underground." If you're into thrash, get this tape. —N.L. Dewart (Five Ten Tapes)

#### OVERNIGHT LOWS: *City of Rotten Eyes: CD*

Overnight Lows are one of those bands that could hold their own at pretty much any punk show you throw their way. The tunes here are filled with the kind of choice chord progressions to please yer average Dangerhouse Records fan, the raw sound that'll keep the Rip Off heads happy, and a vitriolic delivery that virtually guarantees they'd more than hold their own on a bill with the Regulations or yer average straight-ahead hardcore band. Songs are to the point with little in the way of frills or extraneous bullshit, just stripped-down, pissed-off punk rock with catchy hooks up the wazoo. A doozy, this is. —Jimmy Alvarado (Goner)

#### PERMANENT BASTARDS: *Americans for Hope: CD*

There's a sort of new school of punk (hell, maybe that's what I'll call it: nü-punk) that seems to be pretty present now. Music that seems to be really

influenced by Against Me! and the more basic rock sound of current No Idea Records bands. Fortunately, they don't necessarily have to suck as bad as Against Me! (And all apologies to Permanent Bastards if Against Me! is not an influence.) Passionate, at times folksy, and indie singey at other times, but still very punk. It's like a new generation thing, you might say, and I'm down with it when it's done well, even if I won't be listening to this kind of thing often. (The genre, anyway. I probably will come back to this band.) The lyrics on *Americans for Hope* range from being overtly political to socio-political, which provides a pretty good balance. The lyrics are actually what carry the album, driving out a damaged, youthful hope. The lead singer's voice is off-key and sort of, well, weak. Which gives the songs a sincerity when he belts out the choruses the best he can but it has none of that Leatherface/Hot Water Music-biting, if-you-sing-it-gruffly-enough-it-will-sound-like-we-mean-it trend in punk. Instead, it really pretty much has to grow on you. The rest of the band's gang vocals help him out with choruses and some whoah-oh-ohs here and there, which works out well. This is a great punk album, the kind my music snob roommate would dub "shitty punk rock," the kind of punk that record geeks and hipsters who only swear by the classics of The Clash and The Fall would never quite get. Which means it's a damn good punk album for the punks. I can definitely get behind this. —Craven Rock (Self-released)

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## PETROLEUM BY-PRODUCT:

### **Superficial/Artificial: LP**

Petroleum By-Product is a synth-driven punk band. Their album *Superficial/Artificial* is surprisingly solid—influenced by all the right people: Nervous Gender, Screamers, Wall Of Voodoo, etc. There's playfulness with Petroleum By-Product; a sort of B-52's take on the vapidness of daily life in consumer culture. It's reinforced vocally by girl group-style call and response in the vein of Fred Schneider/Wilson and Pierson, recalling the halcyon days of planned obsolescence (see the late '50s/early '60s). It should go without saying that you can dance to this record. The cover art is amazing, too. —Ryan Leach (Mona Mona, [myspace.com/petroleumbyproduct](http://myspace.com/petroleumbyproduct))

## PINHEAD GUNPOWDER:

### **Kick over the Traces: CD**

What does it mean when one of your favorite bands releases a greatest hits album? Sadly, I am no expert in philosophical pop punk inquiries, so instead I'll just say that I've listened to Pinhead Gunpowder in every possible context: in my bedroom in high school after enduring my mom screaming at me, on my headphones during countless late-night bike rides, in my college dorm room in the middle of ridiculous, almost-emo-ish relationship crap, in my apartment writing articles about labor history, and on the dance floor at punk rock dance parties. And, somehow, Pinhead Gunpowder always seemed like the perfect band in all of

these places. Even though I've listened to these songs hundreds or thousands of times, it's still hard for me to deal with how good these songs are. I drove from Minneapolis to Milwaukee last weekend and I listened to this CD for five straight hours. By the time I got to my mom's house, I had a sore throat and my eardrums hurt. If this were a cereal, it'd be Lucky Charms, the highest honor this Razorcake reviewer can bestow. —Maddy (Recess)

### **PONY BOY: Sexual Assault Rifle: LP**

First of all, the title of the record is just brilliant. Something I wish I would have thought of first. Secondly, the album artwork, all of it, is particularly striking. A silk-screened cover, very colorful, with a cardinal perched atop a rifle with a grey kitty looking on. The labels on the record are of a giraffe with boobs and a hornet with an erection. Furries are stoked. And it comes with an insert of what might be a crucified Magnum P.I. Musically, the first thing that comes to mind is Pink Razors, which might make sense since they are both from Bloomington. It's not that it sounds exactly like Pink Razors, because it certainly doesn't, but it sounds as if they both live in the shared space of a Venn diagram that includes modern DIY punk, '80s college rock, and '90s indie rock. They live in a world of pop punk but are acutely aware of more challenging sounds and styles, incorporating complex timings and arrangements with bits of pop sensibilities à la Tanner, or a slightly tamed Triclops! There's

a lot of stuff going on here; effects are employed quite nicely with what sounds like perhaps Theremin, moog, or tape looping. But with precious little information provided, I can neither confirm nor deny the existence of said devices. As well, this is one of the few times I receive a record and wish I had a lyric sheet to go with it so I can sing along without having to guess and make up my own lyrics. It is early in the year, but I think so far I have my favorite new record of the year. *Sexual Assault Rifle* has me a Pony Boy fan. —Jeff Proctor (Let's Pretend)

## PUSHER:

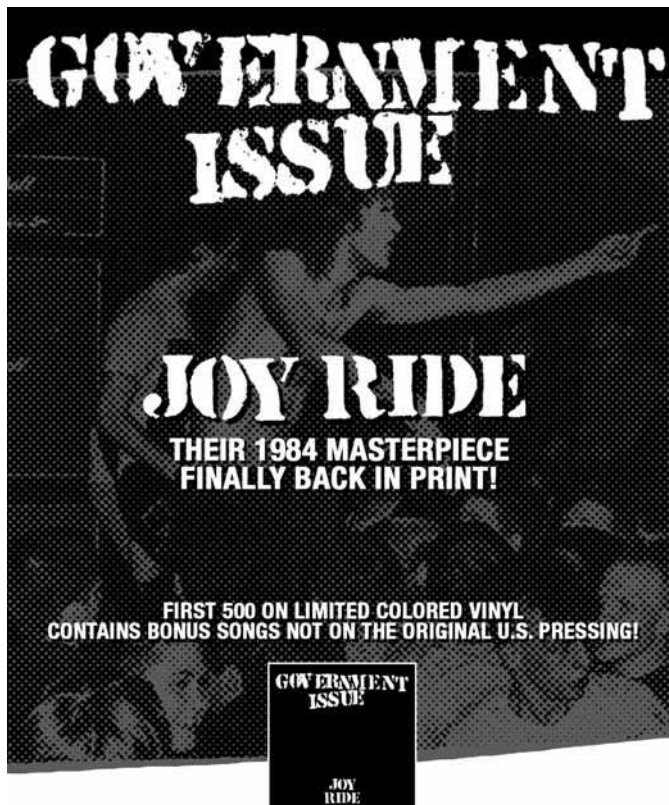
### **Our Beloved City of the Dead: CD**

Just to give some context about how this album flows, this CD is a bit more than twenty-six minutes in length and is ten tracks long. Out of those ten tracks, one of them is an extra track with the first one being a one minute and fifty-two second introduction with some strange, psychedelic-influenced rant about the crappy state of the world. Then the second song "Dead End" begins with its own weird intro that plays for about thirty-nine seconds. It includes another guy talking through a distorted loud speaker, telling people to choose between a red pill or blue pill, I assume paying homage to *The Matrix*. From the start, this album picks up pretty slow and is confusing because the listener still has no clue after about two and a half minutes of listening what the music is going to sound like. In short, this is a reggae-influenced punk album.

I'd say these guys are trying to sound like Tim Armstrong's solo stuff. When they finally get to the music, these guys actually have some decent songs. "Artificialized" is a fun track, as Pusher has a cool way of transitioning from reggae beats on the verses to the more explosive four-to-the-floor choruses. This would have been a more solid EP if these guys just stuck to the music instead of all the filler hi-jinks. —N.L. Dewart (Knot)

### **RAT CITY RUCKUS: Mustard Shot: CD**

I'm getting tired of bands naming themselves via the formula "X City Y." Normally, you know exactly what you'll get, both musically and lyrically, and while such tunes and lyrics are often welcome in my universe, they have become somewhat predictable and overused within the X City Y formula. In some ways, this record wasn't much different (simple, fast tunes and songs about drinking and venereal disease), but, for some reason, Rat City Ruckus's brand of cheap, trashy rock'n'roll wasn't all that stale. I think it's because of the immense influence of bands like the Dayglo Abortions that I sensed lurking just beneath the surface of this record. Musically, Rat City Ruckus plays fast and loose, bordering on being a pure hardcore band. Lyrically, they focus more on drinking than the Dayglos, rather than penning numerous tunes on farting and puking. Overall: loud, fast, and obnoxious. I liked it. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Rockin' Stan)



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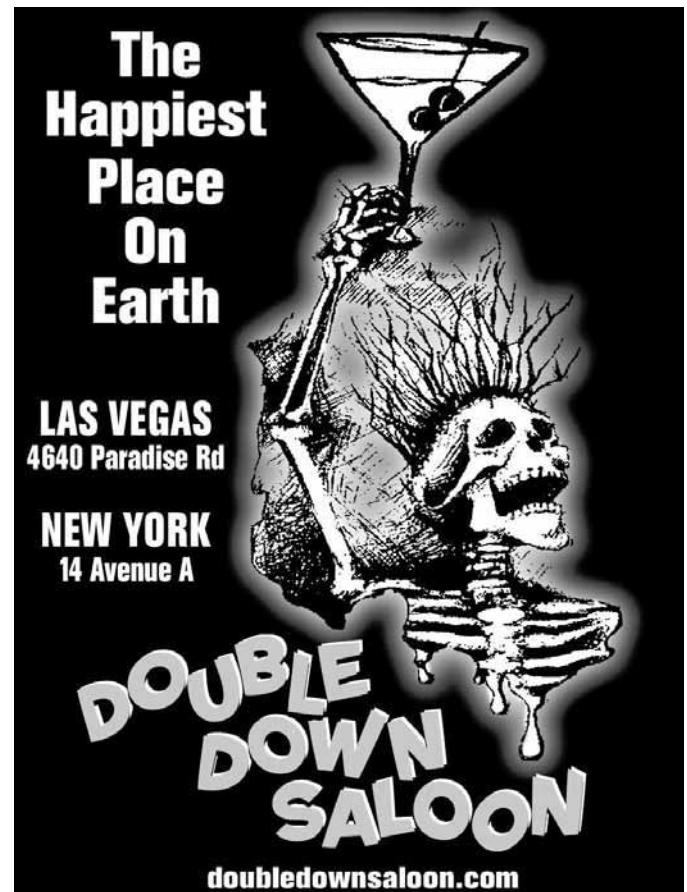
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**RATIONAL ANIMALS:**  
***Distorted Temptation: 7"***

The lyrics are filled with desperate calls for humans to act as individuals and according to their own human nature; not just as mingling automatons stoked full of societal clichés. Their writing just holds up a mirror to the social roles we play day by day. "Distorted Temptation" has a resonating verse of what I feel like being working class: "Overwhelming feelings of dread. Breed grim notions inside your head. The excuse becomes your noose. Killing yourself to survive. Just to get by." All the writing on this 7" is just so powerful and poetic that even the choruses are brimming with meaning. Take the chorus lyrics to "Games and Fun": "Having all the games and fun. Hips that shake, a mouth that runs. Having all the games and fun. I'm you're knife and you're my gun." This isn't the style of hardcore punk I sit at home and listen to, but these guys really put out a potent EP here that is well worth sitting down and listening to. Musically, this 7" is interesting for how the two guitar tracks play various noises and sixteenth note riffs that seem to suck the air out the songs, mirroring the desperate, suffocating feeling of the lyrics. All the song structures are pounded down tight by the rhythm section that enables these guys to make their very own rally cries against insipid social games. —N.L. Dewart (Feral Kid)

**REACTIONARIES, THE: 1979: LP**

Please understand what a one-in-ten-thousand shot this is for this record to come out as well as it did and prevented it from becoming merely a footnote. One: The fact that a pre-Minutemen band practice tape from the late seventies was even found. Two: The fact that the Reactionaries' tape didn't just fall apart when it was discovered and played. Three: The fact that the tape was handled like a deceased friend: with care, respect, and with all intent of honoring the dead. Singer Martin Tamburovich and guitarist D. Boon can't be anything but smiling down from where ever they are. Four: The fact that the "record collector's impulse" didn't intentionally keep this tape obscure, sneak out some pressings on Ebay, then rake in some back door, gray market cash, garnering the respect and envy of a small group of well-heeled vinyl dorks while keeping it out of the hands of folks who love music and are willing to pay modest prices for it. Five: The fact that the fidelity of what's transferred to vinyl sounds honest and true to the time; it's carefully preserved. It's far from mud. And it's far from being pro-tooled to death or "Let's fix the bottom end" bullshit. Six: With all that said, if there was just an A side to this record—the practice tape—it's an amazing historical, archival effort—with its heart in exactly the right place—where you can hear the molecules and DNA of the Minutemen banging around and forming. But the fact that the B side is

roundtable congregation of over thirty current (mostly) San Pedro musicians covering the songs on the A side is flabbergasting all the way from a conceptual to a logistical point of view. History ain't dead folks; no reason to jump into a coffin before your time. Music ain't dead, either. There's a direct legacy that continues on through today. It still can be done "in house." No need for larger labels, fancy-assed studios, or unsympathetic outsiders. Going back sometimes means leaping forward. Protection is often for the survival of the species. Seven: Most of us don't even have pot thoughts this lucid and complicated. The fact that this record not only exists but was pulled off with so much focus and audio payoff warrants as many people as possible who claim to like punk to listen to this one-in-ten-thousand shot. —Todd (Water Under The Bridge / 45 RPM, waterunderthebridge.com)

**READ, THE: Self-titled: 7"**

The first thought that ran through my mind when I put on this 7" was, Q And Not U reunited and changed their name. After looking into it more, I found out that that's not true. However, these guys do cite Q And Not U as a band with a comparable sound. The Read has the whole dance punk thing going for them with that strange Dischord guitar riffage sound intermixed into it. Unfortunately, these tracks lack originality and they feel like collages of different Q And Not U songs. I'm going to have to give their full length a

chance, which is supposed to come out some time this year, before I can decide if I like their music. I'm not sold on this 7" alone. —N.L. Dewart (Phratry)

**REGULATIONS: To Be Me: CD**

It's funny how almost unavoidable it is to mention Circle Jerks, Adolescents, or Germs when describing Regulations' sound. It's a stigma that I'm sure the band members are tired of being attached to. But I recently came to the conclusion that Regulations has been able to accomplish what none of those bands were able to: consistency in quality. Not one of those bands had more than one record that would ever live up to their brilliant debuts. Regulations came from out of nowhere with two excellent EPs in 2003. They were quick to follow those up with a ridiculously good full length, a mini LP, and a third EP just to let everyone know they weren't going anywhere. A couple of years and some side projects later did nothing to slow down what has already been an impressive stream of great releases. A second full length should have been where the bottom finally fell out for these guys, but, fuck me, this is just as great of a listen as any of their previous works. Old school dinosaurs be damned and current bands take notes: be unto the Regulations! —Juan Espinosa (Deranged)

**RESIST AND EXIST: Ad Liberty: CD**

Even though I long ago gave up on the idea of anarchism, or any "ism" for that matter, being a viable reality and

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vehicle towards an idyllic society, I still carry similar sympathies and have a soft spot for anarcho punk bands. Unlike their parrot punk cousins, whose only apparent interest is in getting back at an amorphous "system" by singing songs about getting drunk and coloring their hair purty colors, the anarchy bands that take their Bakunin seriously have always seemed to me to have their hearts in the right place when they sing about peace, self-governance, and not being an asshole to others. I remember playing with Resist And Exist and Media Children on one or two occasions and thought they were among the more interesting of that crop of bands, and this collection of what sounds like a couple of demos and live tracks shows a band a bit more conscious than the other punters of tempering the inevitable sloganeering with diversity in their delivery. Sure, there's no shortage of angry thrashing, but there is also some slower and—dare I say it?—occasional poppy moments to be found as well. Dunno if they ultimately had much impact on the greater world, but it's clear that they sincerely wanted to, and that intent sometimes goes a long way. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mass Media)

#### **RIPSHIT / DYLAN BREDEAU: Split: 7"**

With a name like Ripshit, they sure have the confidence to live up to it. Four songs of fast, raging, political hardcore which rail against consumption, laws, America and all the stuff that punk is epically pissed off about. Nothing has changed, so why stop? Female-fronted, this band

is best on the song "Ripshit Votes Kill 'Em All and Let God Sort 'Em Out" which rails against the ignorance of voting for Hillary Clinton as being feminist and for voting at all. That's the first time I've heard that cliché put to good use! Dylan Bredeau is a three-piece of '90s-style emo hardcore with shrieking gang vocals. These are good hardcore songs if you don't think about the horrid lyrics about holding hands and sharing soy ice cream. —Craven Rock (Spicy Soup)

#### **SCHATZI AND HAZELTINE: Happy Birthday Baby b/w When Yr Alone: 7"**

Two pleasant retro-girl group songs with a bit of country jangle to them. I've never heard of them before (admittedly, this is the kind of stuff that I enjoy, but don't tend to actively seek out), and get the impression this is a one-off project. Probably for someone's birthday. I'm smart like that. Neat stuff! —Joe Evans III (Burger)

#### **SCHOOL JERKS: Self-titled: EP**

Gawwwwwwwd damn! The best record I've had the chance of reviewing this issue! Raw hardcore punk that reminds me of early Black Flag (a comparison I don't make often—do your research if you doubt me) with the guitar sound and the sinister way it all plays out. The vocals are seriously killer, totally spat out and foaming-at-the-mouth style. Sounds like someone throwing a shit fit, and they're so mad the words are a series of splats, blats, and bluhs. Not that cheesy Cookie Monster grindcore

growling shit, either! This is the real deal hardcore punk rock. Worthy of repeated listens and phone calls to your friends; "Dude, you gotta get this record!! Seriously!!" type conversations. I hear this is their second EP, and that half of them are from Terminal State. Huh?!?! Never mind all that. Get this and crank it the hell up! One of the better records to be released in some time. Definitely worth driving to a record store for, or even going to some shitty show and rummaging distro boxes to get. —M.Avrq (Cowabunga, cowabungarecords.com)

#### **SCREAMING FEMALES: Singles: CDEP**

Before seeing Screaming Females live, I hadn't done the math in my head. All of those tricky guitar parts—Jimi Hendrix by way of Pussy Galore's Cristina Martinez—was coming from a shy, soft-spoken lady who turned into a lion on stage. Watery waver to full roar; she does all the singing, too. Apparently, Marissa self-taught herself years of guitar when she was taking care of her grandmother, which explains a couple of things: her proficiency and the fact that she doesn't sound exactly like any other guitarist I can think of. This CDEP is a six-song collection of their little vinyls—splits and 7"s—and if you're into loud guitars doing wicked things, here's your ticket. —Todd (Don Giovanni, screamingfemales.net)

#### **SHELLSHAG: Rumors in Disguise: LP**

Shellshag is hard to define. If you've read any of the reviews from their first

record, the word "experiment" usually appears at least once in some form or another. After two years, I still can't figure out how to describe this band to people, but I do know that everyone should at least listen to them once, if not just for the strangeness of it all. Shellshag has also done the impossible task of ruining themselves. If you've ever seen them live, you know exactly what I mean. I can't help but imagine them playing in a cramped living room at my friend's house when listening to this. Their songs, no matter how well they're recorded, never capture the amazing talent and fun they exude when in front of an audience. Oh yeah, the record is fucking great. Essential listening. Nothing I said should undermine how good of a record this actually is, but if they're ever in your town (or within proximity), go to them. You shall understand. Amen. —Bryan Static (Don Giovanni, dongiovannirecords.com)

#### **SIN REMEDIO:**

##### **Border Hoppin' Hardcore: CD**

Los Angeles's Sin Remedio play music from two poles: grindcore and nortños. They play these widely divergent styles of music with equal focus and power. My favorite tracks are where they oscillate and blend the two styles. "Manias del Pensamiento" is a prefect example. The women's sweeter voices hover over the ragged rubble of the guys' voices; there's a nice and tender sweep of instruments before the rough and broken concrete crash of guitars. In a lot of ways, tracks like this make



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me instantly think of East L.A. itself. Seeing innocent things—like a public park taken over for a kid's birthday, bright piñatas and balloons, Esponja Bob jumpy castle—surrounded by walls and sidewalks of graffiti, haloed by barbed wire snagging trash above nearby buildings. It's this contrast of dark and light, celebration and decay, that makes Sin Remedio such an interesting and memorable band. My only question mark about this album—due to how textured and multi-moded their sound is—is how it would sound recorded more fully. I'm not saying Fleetwood Mac full, Tragedy full, so you can hear both the atomic blasts and the more floral, delicate nuances. If you're into hardcore, Sin Remedio is well worth your time. —Todd (Sin Remedio, sinremedio.net)

**SMALL BROWN BIKE:**  
**Composite, Volume One: 7"**

Listen, I'm not going to pretend to understand this band or why they have the rabid, ferociously loyal following they have. I honestly just don't get the appeal. I tried repeatedly to get into *Our Own Wars* ten years ago and there was just no spark there for me. Same goes for *Dead Reckoning* just a few months ago. And now there's this two-song 7", their first release since reuniting last year. I'll admit, the band can certainly craft songs that sound thematic and cohesive, it's just that those songs also sound... boring. They sound as well put together as they ever did—if you're a fan of the band you'd probably say the songs

sound dense and complex and have been crafted with a solid foundation and very little gimmickry or pomp, etc. Me, I think they're just kind of... there. The second song, "Hourglass," starts off promisingly, with a strangely playful indie rock guitar line; it actually managed to hold my interest for a few spins. But I think we're all agreed: one song on one seven inch over a ten-year career isn't much of a batting average. —Keith Rosson (No Idea)

**SNAKES, THE: Hiya Hoya: 7"**

Dripping with symbolism, this seven inch appears to be a sort of parable of punk rockers or indie rockers as the ill-fated American Indians, being forcefully assimilated into the greater WASP culture, having their identities co-opted and watered down in to a mainstream mess. The cover art prominently displays a picture of a braided Apache-chief-from-Super-Friends-looking dude ripping a pilgrim in half, with the A-side "Hiya Hoya" and B-side a couplet of tracks dedicated to the seventies half-breed anti-hero, Billy Jack. Musically, it is akin to the more tuneful Flipper numbers: perhaps a bit off-putting at first with its thrashy noise; with repeated spins you'll come to find a seductively clandestine layer of pop sensibilities buried beneath the sonic rubble. This is an interesting and unexpected follow-up to their previously released split with 1-800-Band, also released on Slow Gold Zebra. —Jeff Proctor (Slow Gold Zebra)

**SNARLAS: Self-titled: 7"**

When I received this record in the mail to review, I was really excited since I knew that it was the band that Cindy Crabb of *Doris* zine and her sister were doing. However, in spite of my excitement, I ended up shelving it for a while. Why? Because I didn't want to be disappointed. Just because someone can write a great zine doesn't mean that everything they do is going to be great. However, when I did get around to playing it, I found that my reservations were ridiculous. It's a great record. It's dirty three-chord punk with shouted dual female vocals. A raw, urgent, beautiful mess. The subject matter of the songs has a lot of the same themes you'll find in *Doris* zine: songs about respecting past revolutionary struggles and some about self-preservation and empowerment. A lot of the songs also deal with living through trauma and abuse. For instance, the song "Generation 5," seems to be in the voices of both an older and younger sibling as they try to heal from sexual abuse from their childhood as adults: "tell me, tell me / we can trust each other now / there were nights I knew nothing about / I couldn't protect you like no one protected me." The song "The Things That You Fear Are the Things That Will Save You" is an anthem about not listening to what we've been taught to fear by society and our upbringings and how wonderful and full that can make our lives. What more could you ask for in a punk record? It's heavy, powerful, gutsy stuff. —Craven Rock (Snarlas / Plan-It-X Records South)

**SOURPATCH: Crushin': CD**

This is pretty much adorable from start to finish. The songs are poppy and clever and the recording is just sloppy enough to be interesting. It reminds me a lot of the records I loved as a teenager in the nineties. Not slick, not angry, just a bunch of cool songs that make me feel good when I hear them. And the first track is a little kid being egged on by a grown up to introduce the album. Which should be cutesy and annoying, but it's actually damn cute. —Jennifer Whiteford (Happy Happy Birthday To Me)

**SPENCEY DUDE & THE DOODLES:**  
**Self-titled: 7"**

Hell yeah, there's some zany songs here but it was all I could do to keep from just moving the needle back to the tune "Girl Crazy" over and over again. The ending of said tune goes, "You're girl crazy" and then some funny voice says, "hit the clinic." It's definitely a must-hear track. For a song that's about a minute and a half long, it had me smiling twice as long after I listened to it. This entire 7" is just one concept album of love songs that seem transported straight from the '60s. Spencey Dude & The Doodles sound a lot like The Troggs with every thing from their production aesthetics, reverb, and harmonies. "Flirting," is about a man who gave his girl a quarter to stay in the bar and play the jukebox instead of going out and flirting with the guys. Annamal Doodle's female back up vocals really add a nice touch. This is just one fun and funny EP

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here. —N.L. Dewart (Rob's House, robshouserrecords.com)

#### **SPOOKS: *Death from beyond the Grave*: LP**

Quite a bizarre album here from these Atlanta garage punks, featuring member(s) of the Black Lips and others, somewhere between a Halloween sound effects album and synth punk à la the Screamers, Los Reactors, and the Spits. Some of it is really terrific and engaging, and some of it is really unlistenable. Either way, the fellas seem to be having a fantastic amount of fun with the material and I imagine something like this is better meant to be experienced live. Overall, I think this should have been condensed into a 10" or 7" even, as this is met equally with great enjoyment and great disappointment. Comes on clear vinyl with a pair of 3-D glasses. —Jeff Proctor (Die Slaughterhaus)

#### **STUN GUNS: *And There Was Nothing We Could Do about It...*: LP**

Coincidentally, I picked this up right after watching the documentary, *Cocaine Cowboys*, and it definitely helped set the scene. The Stun Guns were Miami's favorite fuck ups circa '95/'96. Like if Radon had been transported to the urban corruption and cultural clashes of Miami all the while retaining their light-hearted, witty, numb-nut spirit. Any fan of bands like Onion Flavored Rings, Hidden Spots, Future Virgins, and the Beltones should consider this re-issue a mandatory history lesson. —Daryl (Do You Hear We?)

#### **SUPERIOR UNITS:**

##### ***Take Her in the Classroom*: 7"**

Three songs of snotty high school punk (Plastic Idol's website says they really are teens?!), with a confused feeling that's really fun and loopy. Are they learning how to play? Drunk? Scotch tape holding instruments together? Ah, who cares? It's the youthful energy and dirty fuzz that sounds great. Sort of joke lyrics, although "2 Many Dipshit (in my town)" is as realistic as it gets. It'll grow on you like puberty. —Speedway Randy (Plastic Idol)

##### ***Suspect Parts: Maneater*: 7"**

I'm a huge dork for The Briefs. I love their music and put an effort into getting into the guys' side projects, such as Steve E. Nix and his various Leper outfits. So Suspect Parts, that has Chris Brief on drums, is no exception to this. In fact, their other 7", *Change Your Mind*, by Suspect Parts was pretty good. This two track 7" just wasn't as fun. The side-A track, "Man Eater," has my lame brain conjuring up lines of cheesy Hall And Oates tunes, which I actually find more appealing than "Man Eater." It's an acoustic ballad that seems like it's going for that '60s rock feel but the vocals sound annoyingly out of key. Side B actually does a decent cover of Modern Lovers' song, "She's Cracked." The only problem is the tune sort of reminds me of a down tempoed Briefs song, which only makes me wish I were listening to The Briefs. —N.L. Dewart (Taken By Surprise)

#### **SUSPECT PARTS:**

##### ***Seventeen Television*: 7"**

Dudes from the Clorox Girls and the Briefs get together to create perfectly executed Buzzcocks-inspired '77 pop. A-side "Seventeen Television" reminds me a bit of the Buzzcocks tune, "Nostalgia," which I suppose is an appropriate Buzzcocks song to remind one of when playing this style. B-side is more of the same with "Lesson," followed up with the swinging psychedelic cover of Two Cheques' "To Stone." Three short and very sweet, enjoyable tunes here. —Jeff Proctor (Deranged)

##### ***Taser Breath*: Self-titled: 7"**

Whoa!—this is chaotic and a lot for the ears to digest, even in the span of one song—but I like it. There's a strange containment to it all after the first several passes. Grindcore. Someone-lived-in-Tucson-at-one-time weirdness. Dirge. Amphetamine Reptile-style spent fuel and diesel exhaust rock. Samples. It's like listening to The Locust, where twice as many notes are shoved into a limited space that it's a bit much to cram in all at once. But once the ear holes get dilated, and you know that the roller coaster isn't completely coming off the tracks—that it just hasn't followed a regular maintenance schedule—a nice, punchy, jarring ride with moments of pure fright that you're gonna die followed by snatches of pure freefall and pleasant instrumentals spins off the 7". For the four of you this'll make sense to, invert the awesome quirkiness of the Cuntifiers

into a dark and bad-drug filled place. Rub some Anal Cunt into that... then that's what Taser Breath starts to sound like. —Todd (Goin' Ape Shit)

##### ***That's Incredible*: Self-titled: 7"**

It'd be pretty hard for me not to like this record. I already love all of their previous/other bands, not limited to Toys That Kill, Dick Army/Four Deadly Questions, The Soviettes, and Killer Dreamer. I know people always say they hate it when reviews just list off other bands, but this is pretty much a sum of its parts—all of which are great on their own—and comes up with a whole new animal. I highly recommend this. —Joe Evans III (It's Alive)

#### **TROUBLEMAKE / TURKISH TECHNO:**

##### ***Split*: 7"**

Turkish Techno is neither of those things but a fun, punk anthem band, singing about cool girls that will give you something to live for while making you grow old every second—but they ain't bitching about it! Good stuff. Troublemaker is also a solid anathematic band, hailing from D.C., but making sounds in the Dillinger Four universe. This feels more produced than earlier songs—but with the strong, eager oomph they've always had—driving the songs with a spirit you can get on board with. This is the kind of stuff that makes house parties pop, getting everyone to sing and scream together. On their myspace page, main man Sam says he doesn't want to sing and play bass, so they are looking for a singer or a bassist. I love that—no

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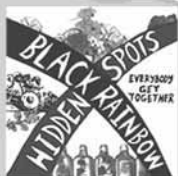
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rock bullshit! Just energetic fun. Looks like they got a bassist so the peppy voice stays. —Speedway Randy (Traffic Street, trafficroadrecords.com)

**TUBERS: *Anachronous*: CD**

I would—and indeed, will—call this angular, technical punk. Drive Like Jehu comes to mind. The songs, for the most part, are good but not quite balls-out frantic enough for my taste. What I actually like best on here are the slow instrumental songs. “Unmutual” and “40 XL” which are where the band lets songs breathe a little bit and, in the process, build tension that they aren’t quite hitting in their other songs. These quiet songs show the band approaching I Hate Myself territory, which being my favorite emo type band, is a really good thing. I’m on the cusp of saying these guys are doing really good on here, but what I really want is a little more push to both extremes of aggression and quiet restraint. If that happens, then I’ll say this band is in awesome land. —Adrian (No Idea)

**UTOPIA: *Niee*: CD**

Musically, they sound like your average modern punk band with all the requisite trappings. Lyrically, however, if the English-from-Polish translations are accurate, they’ve got a nice poetic streak going for them, with some introspection and intelligence in evidence. Can’t say they were the best thing I’ve heard all month, but what they turn in here is a respectable effort. —Jimmy Alvarado (Trujaca Fala, trujacafala.com)

**VAPID: *Practically Dead*: LP**

A couple of years ago, I reviewed Vapid’s pretty good *Do the Earthquake 7”*, which was danceable riot grrl-sounding stuff. This LP, while it has some of the energy of that 7”, doesn’t have an LP’s worth of it. Some of the songs are kind of lulls. Though every song on here unquestionably comes from the same band (mostly courtesy of the vocalist), it kind of seems like Vapid doesn’t really filter out any of their material. There is probably enough good stuff here to fill out a 12”EP, but this just kinda lags as it is. —Vincent (Deranged, derangedrecords.com / Nominal, recordsnominal.com)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Our Boy Roy*: LP**

The Roy in the album title is Roy Orbison and this is an LP’s worth of cover tunes done by some of today’s most vaunted garage rockers. For those who don’t know Orbison’s music (and if you don’t, please explain exactly what planet have you been living on), he’s the guy who sang “Pretty Woman,” which Ty Segall gives an echoed, spooky treatment. It kind of works, but it’s tough to better such an iconic piece of musical Americana. What works incredibly well is the Jacuzzi Boys version of “You Got It,” taking a fairly straight forward tune and tweaking it with exuberant, psychedelic vocals and a perfectly executed fuzz guitar run. Other standout tracks come from the Camero Werewolf Band, Bloodshot Bill, Teenager, Red Mass, and Cheater Slicks, but you’ll have to pick this up, which you should

do, to see what tunes they sing. —Josh Benke (Telephone Explosion)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Rodentagogue: The Best of Dark Roots Music II*: CD**

This is a soundtrack for campfire suicides, lonely horseback rides, and loss. I don’t know what “dark roots music” is, but the bands on this collection fall into two groups. The first take the dustiest, dirtiest sounds of old-school country and do everything they can to add an impenetrable bleakness. They do not make music for sunny days. The second really need to stop listening to *Murder Ballads*-era Nick Cave for awhile. Luckily, bands that fall into the first group far outnumber those that fall into the second. Actually, I don’t know if that’s lucky at all. I think I have to turn this off because the sadness is fucking crushing me right now. —MP Johnson (Devil’s Ruin)

**VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Wrecktrospective, Twenty Years... and Counting*: 3xCD**

Congrats on twenty years, Fat. They’ve become one of my favorite labels of the last few years with releases like *Until We’re Dead*, *Oh Calcutta!*, *Potemkin City Limits*, *Cuban Ballerina*, and the first Fat album I ever bought, *Situationist Comedy*. The first disc is like a chronological greatest hits from a sizeable chunk of Fat’s bands. None of this disc is unreleased material, so it’s very likely that fans of any of these particular bands probably have these tracks already. There are a lot of

goodies on here though, and it’s a good primer for people who may not know certain bands on the label. I learned, with the exceptions of Propagandhi and Swingin’ Utters, that I have very little interest in most of Fat’s pre-2000s catalog. Lagwagon and No Use For A Name just never really did it for me. Disc three is a compilation of the Fat Club single’s series. While I don’t own any of the actual singles, I’ve somehow come to own about half of these tracks over time on B-side comps. There were some things I didn’t have which were great to hear, like the Vandals and American Steel songs. Disc two is where the real rarities come to play. This is a compilation of demos from many Fat bands, new and old. While some of these songs are pretty close to what ended up on the final versions (seriously, what’s the difference between the demo and final version of Rise Against’s “Alive and Well”?), some have pretty entertaining quirks in their raw forms. Standouts include the Lagwagon song that has the super loud drum mix, Dead To Me’s “Writing Letters” with different lyrics, and Against Me’s “You Look Like I Need a Drink” rendered in acoustic form. Included with the set is a poster showing every Fat release up to the present. It’s pretty cool to see the label development in picture form. This is a pretty cool comp to pick up for the price. —Adrian (Fat)

**VERMIN POETS, THE: *Self-titled*: 7”**

I can’t keep up, but I’m sure that I like everything Billy Childish puts out. After

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decades of great music and fronting numerous amazing bands like Thee Headcoats and Thee Milkshakes, he can still associate himself with solid songs and new bands every few years. In an online interview with Heyoka Magazine, Billy names poets as the worse vermin out there, even more despicable than "estate agents and dentists." The V-Poets don't go the way of Bo Diddley per past Childish bands but more of a 1970s punk rock sound; really catchy treble action, like that era's cautious pop optimism. Billy is on bass guitar here with his wife Julie on drums, both backup singing, with Wolf Howard also on drums and Neil Palmer singing and playing guitar. Billy and Palmer write the songs—which don't ring as bad poetry at all—but wise thoughts and giddy insight for all. It's great stuff, really vibrant. Don't think that you've heard it all from Billy and crew. —Speedway Randy (SmartGuy, smartguyrecords.com)

#### WAYWARD, THE: *Alzheimers: 7"*

I used to be an avid fan of a band called Carrion that was around until about 2003 and was always aware of the connection between them and the Wayward, but, for some reason, never really checked this band out. Years later, I'm finding out that I've been missing out and this 7" is great. It's not quite as heavy as Carrion was, but the noodley, J Mascis-esque guitar work is still there. The riffs on the opening track are really bleak but actually pretty intricate. The vocals are spot-on; they're pushed behind the mix but fit into everything well. The bass is a

little hard to discern in the mix, but other than that, the production is solid. Both songs on the A side are great, and the B side is a sleepy cover of the Birthday Party song "The Friend Catcher." —Ian Wise (Forcefield, forcefieldrecords.org)

#### WHISKEY TRENCH: *Television: CD*

I can't help but think of Ringers when I listen to this. This is mainly because of the vocals, but the music contributes, too, to a large degree. Anyhow, Ringers aren't a bad band at all to remind me of, but I'd rather just put on *Detention Halls* since that album is still as great as the day I got it—and I will, just as soon as Nathan gives me my copy back. —Vincent (Kiss Of Death)

#### WONDER YEARS, THE: *The Upsides: CD*

The Wonder Years play a polished brand of pop punk that's ridiculously melodic, smart and über-produced. The vocalist flawlessly hits all the high notes. To me, they sound like their buddies in Title Fight, or a way-wimpier version of Make Do And Mend. That's the review. Now comes the diatribe. I really do hate to bust on a band in such detail but, goddamn, do these guys make it easy for me. I am tired to death of this myopic, self-obsessed, whoa-is-me brand of music. I understand the desire to write about what you know, guys, but haven't we culturally moved past writing songs about our friends "sexting" girls when the van breaks down on tour? Or how the ex-girlfriend's lame? Or how *playing video games make you depressed*? It's obvious this band is smart and can play the fuck out of their

instruments. But for all of the potential here, all they manage to do is namedrop their friends in songs and talk about how they're trying to be happy even though it's raining outside. Spare me. Overall, *The Upsides* is probably an awesome album for junior high kids who feel like walking down the hallway at school can be like running a gauntlet. The adults among us should most likely steer clear. It's rare when a band's collective pissing and moaning can upset me this much, but this is the third review of *The Upsides* that I've written and, believe it or not, the least vitriolic. I'm frustrated because I can see how this band could potentially be really great—but I feel like they repeatedly blow it by lyrically musing on their fucking haircuts for thirteen songs. —Keith Rosson (No Sleep)

#### XGIRLFRIEND EXPERIENCE, THE: *Crazymaker: CD*

I picked up this album because of the title and its reference to the movie (non-porno) that Sasha Gray did. I was surprised to find out that women were behind such song titles as "Zombie Heart," "Blood Bath," and "Scream." These songs seemed to be a move out of The Mapes' playbook. It's refreshing to know that women have a sense of humor dirtier than mine and just about as on par with The Mapes in terms of pushing the limits of decency. Take their tune "Pregnant Again" and its opening lyrics: "Oh no, I think I'm pregnant again. I really don't want another abortion." Musically, the best comparison I can make to a band other than The Mapes

would be The Runaways. I don't think the tunes on this album have the mass market, instant classic appeal that tunes like "Cherry Bomb" has, but not many songs do. These women are willing to take their sexuality where even Jett would fear to tread. The funniest song on the CD is "I'm a Slut." It's sort of like a *Grease* musical number, but replace the PG cast singing about an innocent high school fling with the women from The XGirlfriend Experience taking it to an X-rated sex-capade. I must lead a sheltered life because I don't know women this brash, but hey, at least I have the CD to prove they exist.

—N.L. Dewart (Unrepentant)

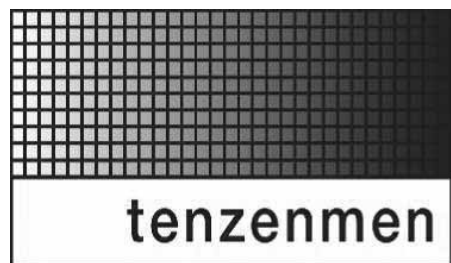
#### YEAR OF THE PIG: *Self-titled: CD*

Thinkin' man's metal, with sludgy geetars and songs about blind consumerism and media manipulation. The reimagining of the famous Iwo Jima flag-raising photo with an oil derrick replacing the flag that serves as this disc's cover art is great. —Jimmy Alvarado (Spider Cuddler)

#### ZYGOTEENS, THE / THE HUSSY: *Split: 7"*

Zygotens: distorted, crunched, punky power pop. Contains requisite hooks and some wailing guitar solos. The Hussy: male/female duo that cranks out the punky power pop as well, but with more of an arty-dancey-feel to it. All in all, two songs from two gnarly bands that sound good on the record, but probably sound a lot more fun live. —Daryl (Big Action)

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# ZINE REVIEWS

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"The paper smells  
good and there are  
some pictures of  
Minor Threat and  
Fugazi that are really  
fun to stare at."

—Rene Navarro  
SIX PACK, #0

**AB** #9, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2",  
photocopied, 16 pgs.

*Ab* is an offshoot of the nomadic, tech-less, camper-by-choice zine *Dwelling Portably*. According to the little intro, "*Ab* discusses how and where to live better." If you'd told me this was another issue of *Dwelling Portably*, I'd believe you. It's got the same small type crammed onto each page, and is put together as a list of tidbits with titles like, "For foot comfort and health, change footwear often," "Reply to D.S. in Florida," and "Is the U.S. jumping out of the emergency room into the morgue?" This issue also has a fair amount of information about farming. —CT Terry (Lisa Ahne, PO Box 181, Alsea, OR 97324)

**BIG HANDS** #7, photocopied, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 48 pgs. I like reading *Big Hands*. I think Aaron is a great writer. His style is overly analytical and cerebral. It almost seems like we are taken along on his inner dialogue as he attempts to make sense of the world. His writing really makes me think and I appreciate it for that. That said, I rarely agree with his outlook on anything. To be honest, I often find him to be a bit offensive, just because he's so cynical and hopeless. This is not a diss, but I am saying that I have trouble identifying with him. He has that sort of detached style of writing, not unlike where Al Burian went after issue #10 of *Burn Collector* or a much more tolerable and less know-it-all Ian Svenonius. I've always been more into the writing style of the folks who rip their hearts out and throw them on the page. Those who scrap like a cornered rat for what they want out of life. Aaron tends to stick to pessimism and dry wit as if these are the things that are going to protect him. Nonetheless, he is bitterly funny and cleverly snide. His observations are illuminating and profound, even if they often left me feeling a bit depressed. And the man can really put some words together. There's no denying that. —Craven Rock (Aaron C. Smith, 1104 Imperial Rd., Cary, NC 27511, microcosmpublishing.com)

**BRAINSCAN** #24, 30 pgs., 3 1/2" x 4 1/4", photocopied

I've read some issues of this zine before: some I didn't like, some I thought were okay, and some I liked. I feel like they vary greatly in quality per issue. I guess it gets like that when you get up to #24 of something. Having said that, this issue just happens to be one that I didn't like at all. It's just really petty. She talks about how she watches TV shows on her computer, how she's OCD about socks, how she's into geeky things like *Lord of the Rings* (book) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, a little bit about collecting shoes, and several more topics of this nature that are just really trite. It's a small, short zine in which she doesn't even elaborate more on these topics than I have summarized in this review. It's not that I really want her to, but this zine is just so tiny and contains so little information that even if you wanted to read more on those subjects, you don't get much more than a myspace profile laid out beautifully in the zine format. There's also a lot of self-referential zine stuff in here like how she got her pen name, Alex Wrekk. She's spent time writing about her pen name in earlier issues and I really don't care to know anymore. Nor do I care about how many zines she's put out over the years or the one she did in high school. I'm really tired of this kind of minutia mucking up the zine world. It's hard for writers in the zine medium to get taken seriously and this type of trivia is a large part of the problem. This issue has an in-club thing going on where she refers to her partner as if we all know who he is. She also reprints "Out of Context Quotes" that her friends have said, followed by their first names. If she's just going to give this zine out to a small circle of friends, that's okay, but I'm sick to death of the whole "zine community" thing—which is really a small group of D.I.Y kids who marginalize the rest of the zine makers and even zine readers—just like some kind

of small town. Just doing a zine is not the highest good, no matter what Portland says or that Make-A-Zine-In-An-Hour workshop says. Alex talks a whole lot in here about all the zines she's done (forty-five), but I just have more respect for quality than quantity. Once again, I have read some interesting, well-written issues of *Brainscan* before and I'm not entirely comfortable making it a sacrificial lamb, but this one just gets to me because it so perfectly representational of some of negative trends that have been happening in the zine world for the past ten years. —Craven Rock (Alex Wrekk, PO Box 17230, Portland, OR 97217)

**DISTORT** #26, \$40 subscription, 8" x 11 3/4", photocopied, 12 pgs. If you absolutely love punk, hardcore, or whatever it's being called at the moment, then *Distort* is the zine for you. This is a zine for those who will fuck up their finances for rare vinyl, those who will eat rice and beans for weeks in order to get that expensive collector record for their collection, and this is for those who put adding one more to their collection over having meaningful relationships with humans (not to mention they can tell you the lineup of some obscure band, their complete discography, track order, etc-etc before they could tell you their parents' date of birth). This issue is focused solely on Rikk Agnew's *All By Myself* LP. Breaking it down track by track, there is commentary from Rikk Agnew himself—which is no doubt interesting—then there's some thoughts and speculation by the editor, DX. I definitely don't feel the same way about that album, but I do find this an interesting read, as always. The forty dollar price tag may seem a bit steep for a fanzine, but keep in mind this is coming from Australia, so postage isn't cheap. But, more importantly, each issue of *Distort* is really a well-written and documented addition of punk rock history, past and present. This is a zine that you will reference

to the end of time, and that is no exaggeration. —M.Avrq (PO Box 239, North Carlton, VIC, 3054, Australia, distorttheworld@gmail.com)

**DISTORT** #27, 8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 10 pgs.

This issue of *Distort* contains Daniel's columns from *MRR*. If you've never read *Distort* or his columns (entitled "All Foreign Junk") in *MRR*, he's an extremely passionate, hardcore-crazed hooligan who does a great job at making terrible and disgusting things sound really cool. Focusing primarily on punk/hardcore made outside the "axis of evil" of the U.S., Japan, and Sweden, you get the lowdown on a lot of great bands that would remain overlooked in the international punk community. A noble endeavor, indeed, and being the lead singer of the thrashing hardcore outfit, Straightjacket Nation, you know he's not just some shit-talking zine writer who can't back it up. —Daryl (Distort, PO Box 239, North Carlton, VIC, 3054, Australia)

**DUDES MAGAZINE** #14, \$4, full-size, printed with glossy cover, 76 pgs. To me, *Dudes Magazine* will always be a shirt first and a zine second. That's pretty much because Daryl has a *Dudes Magazine* shirt that he wears for stretches of time; at least he did the last time I saw him. And like the T-shirt, the cover of this zine has held up pretty well. I've been carrying it around for a few months in my backpack, yet it shows less wear than a textbook would after a week. Moving on. The first thing that struck me about Dudes was their argot. I have never heard "bitch" used in a praiseful manner before. I got my clue when I was reading about their "bitch songs" and found Bananas' "Nautical Theme" on the list. After a bit of deliberation and reading over some of the other choices, I realized that "bitch" was in fact being used to praise things (and that some Dudes like shitty songs). Nonetheless, I doubt that I will never get the needle on the Dude-o-meter

in the red, seeing as how I think it just sounds weird to call something "bitch." Also, the Dudes are big on abbreviating words—shit like "za" for "pizza," and luckily not acronyms. I usually have the time for multiple syllables, so I probably won't be picking this one up, either. Once I got that under control, I began to notice that this zine is kind of a way for the contributors to talk shit on whatever, including each other. For instance, one of the Dudes likes those annoying Free Credit Report band commercials; another Dude finds them to be shitty. Each of them, in separate parts of the zine, has an

rock'n'roll, punk, and hardcore, and the editor, Sam Richardson, says in his introduction to this issue, "For all that can go wrong, all I need is that spark that only music can deliver..." Interviews are with Rational Animals and the Pits. There's a dissection of Roky Erickson's *The Evil One* LP, which also provides some history of the artist, and is interesting. Perhaps the most interesting section though is the "Best of 2009" record reviews. The enthusiasm is contagious, and had me going back and listening to some of the titles he reviews, with a different perspective. The Greg Ginn show review is also interesting

**LIKE A BOWLING BALL THROUGH THE DOOR: A PERSONAL ANTHOLOGY, PART I:** \$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 92 pgs. Disclaimer: Joe Evans III has been in the Razorcake family for several years. He was vetted like all writers completely new to us are vetted: your resume don't mean shit, turn in writing that shows you know what Razorcake's about, add something to it, let your enthusiasm and true interests shine, grammar's important, and spell check them shits. Keep on plugging away. (I'll admit there's one thing that will impress me—if someone pretentious over at *Punk*

stuff—punk and comedy—that helped give him forge his own identity. And that's a really cool thing to see happen in a zine that's primary about other people. —Todd (Joe Evans, jeevansIII@gmail.com)

**MISHAP #27**, \$2 or trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 32pgs. Oh, man, a book issue. I do love good books and have a habit of asking people their favorite book. This is a zine dedicated to that very question. There is about a decade's worth of good recommendations in here (if you're a slow reader), along with some good stories about

**"If you absolutely love punk, hardcore, or whatever it's being called at the moment, then *Distort* is the zine for you."**

—M.Avrq *DISTORT* #26

article about how he's right about the commercials. There is some other writing about television in here. There are also some record reviews, interviews, celebrity obituaries, a tour journal, and the cover story. One of the interviews is with Off With Their Heads, which was pretty good and kinda recorded. I say "kinda" because interviewer mentions that he usually just takes notes and writes what he remembers. The tour journal follows Nighthawk, I think. He went on tour with some band, who I can't remember, and, among other things, left porno tapes hidden in people's homes. The cover story was about Dudes innertubing on some river. I started to read it a few times, but quickly realized each time that I hate water activities and have no desire whatsoever to even read about them. Maybe something totally awesome happened on their adventure. Get the issue and find out. Other things to note are: 1) Dudes prides itself (or at least sells itself) on being good for bathroom reading; not being a bathroom reader, I can neither confirm nor deny this. 2) Nighthawk also contributes to *Razorcake*. 3) This is worth checking out if you run into it. 4) Similar to this issue coming out after it was originally planned, this review got turned in one cycle late. —Vincent (Dudes Magazine World Headquarters, 714 Zeiss Ave., Lemay, MO 63125)

**GOT MYSELF #4**, \$5, 8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 32 pgs. I'm starting to see more music-based zines these days, and I feel that's a good thing. People need to document this music, no matter what era we're in. *Got Myself* is rooted in

and funny at points. If you liked the zine *Destroy What Bores You*, then you should check this out, fer sure. —M.Avrq (Sam Richardson, Johnson Hall, Room 923, 801 W Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23220-4103, feelitrecords@gmail.com)

**GREAT MYSPEACE SWINDLE, THE** \$2 or trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 28 pgs. It's a zine! It's a social experiment! It's an exposé on the faceless and pseudo-personal world of social networking! It's all three in one! Here, Mr. Logic creates a fake female persona, sends out friend requests, and waits to basically see what happens (and logs it). Things take a turn toward personal with one member, and it leads to a predictable, depressing outcome. There are awkward moments aplenty here (highlights include a faceless profile picture... stranger than it sounds), and the whole thing makes you depressed that Myspace and Facebook are so popular and used so heavily. On a personal and related note, I finally quit Facebook in February and have actually started calling/spending time with my friends instead. I recommend it. I think Sean would, too. —Will Kwiatkowski (Sean Logic, 660 4th St. SF, CA 94107)

**KID CUTBANK #2**, \$1.50, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" 28 pgs., photocopied A young Ben Cutbank rants with much vigor against school, work, patriotism, and the system. There's a new kid in town. Recognize! —Craven Rock (hoodrat-militia@riseup.net)

*Planet* has given your zine a scathing review "inferring that I'd failed high school English," which they'd done to Joe.) *Bowling Ball* is a collection of interviews that Joe has done over the last decade, many which were published in these pages. The collection starts out with a super-fuckin'-dorky Joe (who looks barely twelve in the photo) interviewing The Ataris. I've always contended that zines provide the truest band histories-in-time because it shows bands-in-motion, still figuring stuff out. It always makes me feel all gooey that a bunch of sellouts talk all "Minor Threat-y" and "doing it for the kids" a couple years before they sign to whatever major they signed to, have their tours sponsored by Volkswagen, and completely wash their hands of DIY punk. Go Ataris! In his Affirmative Action Jackson interview, Joe makes the essential adjustment from "what are your influences?" to cracking the safe and figuring out how to get bands to tell stories that are memorable, unique, and, if possible, have life lessons—"If you get lost going to a show, you go to a pizza place in town, call it from the outside, order a pizza to the house, and then you follow the delivery driver to the show." Genius. Joe also solves a geographical enigma with the Used Kids' Nate. "Wisconsin and New Jersey both have in common being states that are somewhat overlooked, because they're both next to big cities full of assholes." Insightful. Throughout *Bowling Ball*, more of Joe's personality comes out. Here's a dude who grew up in a suburb of New Jersey and, instead of dying there, found

favorite and "first" books, a section about Tom Robbins (I still wanna read *Jitterbug Perfume*), and a wide variety of suggestions on books both new and old. One of these every two years or so would be awesome. —Will Kwiatkowski (PO Box 5841 Eugene, OR 97405 mishapzine@yahoo.com)

**RISE AND THE FALL OF THE HARBOR AREA, THE** #14, \$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 40 pgs., offset It's issue fourteen of this much-loved San Pedro regional punk zine. I really liked it a lot myself. I might, for the sake of this review, be required to read a long write-up of the greasy diners of Pedro, a city that is thousands of miles away from me. It *should* mean very little to me. However, I was surprised to find it entertaining and damned funny. But that's the nature of good writing, and the same reason why I liked the record and DVD reviews. There are some great interviews in here, too. The ones with Japanther and some guys who start a guerrilla skatepark were excellent. There was also some with Street Eaters, Epic Debauchery, and Aaron Cometbus (as a member of Pinhead Gunpowder). This issue also includes info on all things Pedro—punk and otherwise—license-secured poetry from Charles Bukowski, a Pedro native. My only problem with this zine is that it had an advertisement taken out by a bail bond agency. Aren't they *The Man*? —Craven Rock (The Rise and The Fall, PO Box 1794, San Pedro, CA 90733, theriseandthefall.com)

**RITSHAG #10**, \$2, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", copied, 28 pgs. I'm not sure why, but the last few

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After a bit of deliberation and reading over some of the other choices, I realized that “bitch” was in fact being used to praise things (and that some Dudes like shitty songs).

—Vincent  
DUDES MAG #14

zines I've gotten for review have put this emphasis on releasing an issue every month or on some otherwise strictly adhered-to schedule. I'm not sure if *Ritshag* is in the same boat, but for a tenth issue, this thing looks really flung together and is seriously lacking content of any real depth. Like, at all. This nonsensical comic has a how-to that's riddled with shitty spelling, a centerfold that's full of doodles, a few reviews, and stream-of-consciousness rants. The best piece is a quick one that questions the beauty standard, and even that reads like some kind of high school writing assignment. Seriously, you guys: don't concern yourselves so much with quantity. Don't rush yourselves in the need to get something out. Because this issue was kind of a waste of time, you know? If you don't edit

yourselves, a reader's going to edit you by throwing your shit away without even looking at it. —Keith Rosson (Matt Filyk, PO Box 22078, Brandon, MB R7A 6Y9, Canada)

**SIX PACK** #0, free, 8 1/2" x 11", printed, 73 pgs. This is a pretty cool zine, the kind you would get at a skate shop or something. The paper smells good and there are some pictures of Minor Threat and Fugazi that are really fun to stare at. I'm not down with the number zero thing, for some reason. It's like, I know it's not going to happen again, but the next issue is going to have #1 on it, even though it's actually #2 kind of upsets me for some reason. *Six Pack* really represents a specific Mexican punk fanbase. It features interviews with NOFX and Bouncing Souls—both of

whom recently played there—random stuff like a page of best-selling punk bands, along with staples like record reviews. Stuff also covered: queer punk, a Jesse Michaels interview, Amoeba Records, punk festivals, and why do people still care about Social Distortion? —Rene Navarro (alejandro\_om@hotmail.com)

**THAT'S NOT SKANKING** #7, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 22 pgs., photocopied. This is a zine that covers the Manchester ska scene, put out by TNS Records. Interviews with The Stupids, Cartoon Violence, Beat The Red Light, Jimmy The Squirrel, and the owners of ska bar Bomb Ibiza. Some liberal politics and some scene politics. —Craven Rock (TNS, Flat 113, The Hacienda, Manchester, M1 5DB, England, thatsnotskanking@hotmail.co.uk)

**WHAT'S THE JAM** #6, free, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", printed, 25 pgs. This zine is super upbeat and positive. I'm a big fan of handwritten (yet legible) zines, especially if the person who wrote it likes hardcore. Bane does, indeed, rule quite a bit. The show and record reviews are pretty cool. I liked the drawings of the little record review fox. It made me think of Belle And Sebastian's music. It's a short, fun, well laid out zine with super cool cutout cover. —Rene Navarro (1626 N. Wilcox Ave. 919 Hollywood, CA 90028)

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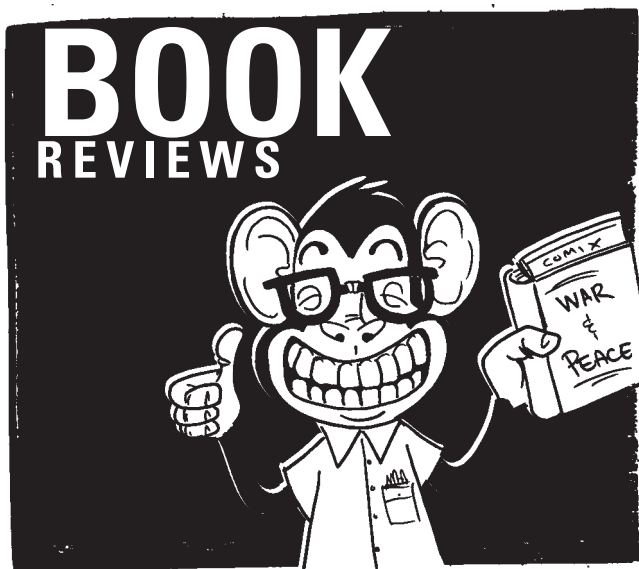
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### And Now the Nightmare Begins: The Horror Zine

*Edited by Jeani Rector, 256 pgs.*

When this book arrived at my mailbox, I excitedly put on my favorite cloak and plastic Dracula fangs and got ready to discover a whole new generation of horror writers following in the footsteps of Stephen King, H.P. Lovecraft, and Edgar Allen Poe: the only three horror authors I could think of off the top of my head. I poured some Hawaiian Punch (which, for the purpose of reading this extremely spooky collection of scaaaary fiction, I pretended was blood) into a skull-shaped goblet and began to devour this book, much like the Wolfman might devour the Mummy during one of their bone-chilling battles (I'm not really into horror stuff, so I'm really reaching with my references here). I'm proud to say that I didn't once scream and run away terrified from this collection, which I believe is what's supposed to happen when reading this. *And Now the Nightmare Begins: The Horror Zine* features contributions from aspiring poets, writers, and artists from across the country who specialize in the macabre. It is essentially a print version of the website, thehorrorzine.com, which helps promote unknown horror hopefuls from across the country. While none of this had me vomiting in terror (well, not in the way it may have been intended to. There is some really fucking goofy shit in this book), I found a lot of this to be fun to read. It also helps to picture all of these being read by Vincent Price in your head. —Andy Conway (BearManor Media, PO Box 71426, Albany, GA 31708)

### Appetite for Self-Destruction:

#### The Spectacular Crash of the Record Industry in the Digital Age

*By Steve Knopper, 301 pgs.*

This is a compelling account of the downward spiral the corporate music industry has been in since the post-disco crash of the late 1970s. The financial booms are all cataloged—from MTV and Michael Jackson to the boy band craze—but they're sprinkled throughout the in-depth accounts of regressive thinking from music executives as well as descriptions of the absurd expense accounts given to moguls while artists were paid pennies per record sold.

The most interesting part of this book is that industry executives are always referred to by name, and about midway through the book, you truly get an understanding of how small a world the music industry is. The same people are referenced throughout as big decision makers (usually making the wrong decisions) over the course of two decades, and the big players in the industry become concrete characters in the book, fully developed outside of the archetypes most readers will want to put them in.

The book also gives very in-depth descriptions of the technology that has changed music forever, including how the CD was developed and exactly where the technology for Napster came from. Knopper does a great job of presenting the Napster case fairly and pointing out mistakes both parties made, but goes into detail about the mistakes the industry made over and over again by rejecting the technology instead of trying to find ways to make deals and monetize it immediately.

Knopper is a seasoned music journalist and used his experience and contacts to make sure this book came out right. His conversational writing is complemented by constant specifics and quotes from sources. All

quotes and references are tediously detailed. This is a compelling read for anyone remotely interested in music business, and if you hate the music industry but don't really know why, you should probably read this. —Ian Wise (Soft Skull)

### Bakunin: The Creative Passion

*By Mark Leier, 374 pgs.*

To write a book about an oft-misunderstood Russian anarchist and make it enjoyable and engaging is an extraordinary feat. In *Bakunin: The Creative Passion*, author Mark Leier offers "...an interpretation of Bakunin's life and ideas of use to those interested in understanding anarchism and social change." In today's political climate, where the supposed political center has moved so much to the right that Republican ideas are pejoratively announced as "socialist," writing a tome on Bakunin is an exposition on what *real* leftist thought has been, should be, and is. Furthermore, to personalize and humanize a man who is often derided by the right (and liberals) as a bearded, bomb-throwing lunatic also redirects the narrative further away from right wing propagandists.

Leier offers no apology for Bakunin. Instead, he attempts to explain, clarify, and interpret Bakunin's writing and personal life with a well-researched and reasoned approach. I would have liked to have seen more time spent on the charge that Bakunin was anti-Semitic; the two pages given could have been expanded. However, by putting Bakunin in the proper historical context, many of the criticisms that have been lobbed at Bakunin either fall short or miss their mark completely. Particularly interesting is the antipathy between Karl Marx and Bakunin. While sharing many ideas and analysis, the antagonism between the German Marx and Russian-born Bakunin is at best perplexing and at its worst, amusing. They both, (along with Engels) act like petty school boys trying to please their teacher with excellent test scores and essays while blowing spitballs in each other's ears behind the teacher's back (Not to make light—Marx leveled a variety of charges at Bakunin, often accusing him of being a spy).

Nevertheless, *Bakunin* is a fantastic glimpse into a complex man who had ever-changing and evolving ideas when presented with new facts and evidence. In fact, he went from being a nationalistic young man to an anti-statist through the course of his life, hammering and forging his ideas against many of the best political philosophers of Europe. As the cliché goes, "hindsight is 20/20," and when looking at historical figures who are controversial and unable to defend themselves on account of being dead, we can find fault with Bakunin, just like we can find fault with just about anyone, on any subject. That being said, Leier's attempt at clarifying Bakunin in historical context is boldly enjoyable. —Steve Hart (Seven Stories Press, sevenstories.com)

### Lifter Puller vs. The End of

*Compiled By Jessica Hopper, 90 pgs., with download card*

Every couple of seasons, I go through a spell where I end up listening to nothing but Lifter Puller for almost a week straight. It was during one of these when I decided to splurge on this retrospective about the underappreciated-during-their-time Minneapolis indie rock punk band. I was hoping for any inside insights I could get about the narrative-style lyrics and the people who wrote and performed them. This is what I got, but I am certainly left wishing for more. The book is split up like this: One-third of the ninety or so pages are pictures, one-third are lyrics, and the other third are quotes from friends, roadies, engineers, and label dudes about the band, arranged sequentially throughout their five releases. The arrangement is great, the glossy pictures shine, and the snippets of narrative do start to form some sort of cloudy story as you read through. It also comes with a download card for every song the band ever recorded, which makes the thirty-five dollar price a lot easier to swallow, and makes the book much more practical for casual fans. Certainly, this retrospective is a very nice companion piece for a band that didn't get the recognition they deserved until years after their breakup, and it would fit nicely on any fan's shelf. I think my problem is just that I was hoping for more of a proper biography. This is not. —Nick Toerner (Blue Collar Distro, bluecollardistro.com)

### Portable Grindhouse: The Lost Art of the VHS Box: Vol. 1

*By Jacques Bayreau, 200 pgs.*

People might have casually predicted the resurgence of vinyl records, but few could predict that there would be any nostalgia attached to VHS tapes. Whether or not it is a superior format is questionable, but there is definitely something lost with the fading out of VHS, particularly as a lot of '80s and '90 low budget films are getting lost in the mix. That and the fact that many bookstores are selling off their videos for pennies certainly justify an ever-widening interest in VHS. From Fantagraphics, the company who



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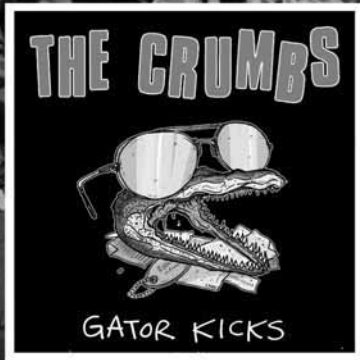
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brought you all of Peter Bagge's Buddy Bradley adventures, comes an art book dedicated solely to the art of VHS boxes. Video enthusiast Jacques Boyreau collects an interesting array of video boxes, ranging from obscure titles that you may not have heard of, to titles you might know in weird boxes. Boyreau starts the book with a timeline of his first memories of retail rental. For those of a certain age, there is a surprising amount of depth attached to the wonder of first having home access to movies. Like Boyreau, my first rentals were before there were actual stores dedicated to renting tapes. Often times, for me, it would be the supermarket. In the case of the book, a furniture store.

Some other reviewers have taken issue with the fact that there are non-grindhouse titles included in the book. If you want to get hung up on the word, it is not all technically grindhouse, but it is a cool-looking collection of covers. And for those who love fishing through boxes at bookstores, yard sales, and thrift stores, it is a nice book to flip through. Boyreau is a fan of videos; his interest makes you wish he would write more on the subject. There is a Vol. 1 attached to the title. Perhaps there will be a Volume 2. —Billups Allen (Fantagraphics, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115)

## Precious Metal

Edited By Albert Mudrian, 384 pgs.

*Decibel* is probably my favorite magazine that covers heavy music (hardcore, metal, industrial, and all the associated subgenres.) The writing is interesting and they do some creative things with their content. And in every issue (or pretty close to it) *Decibel* has a feature called "Hall of Fame" which is where, as *Precious Metal* explains it, they "take a classic extreme metal record (as determined by our staff) released at least five years ago, track down and interview every member who played on it, and present them questions exclusively about the writing, recording, touring, and overall impact of said album."

There are twenty-five interviews in *Precious Metal*, covering such albums as Black Sabbath's *Heaven and Hell*, Napalm Death's *Scum*, Cannibal Corpse's *Tomb of the Mutilated*, Down's *NOLA*, and Converge's *Jane Doe*. The content of each interview is broad and explores each album in an in-depth manner. Most of these albums are pretty extreme, though: there's stuff from Carcass, Obituary, Repulsion, Morbid Angel, and the like—you're not going to find anything from that one punk band you like that you think is kind of "heavy." Thus, you're going to have to be a pretty big-time metal fan to really enjoy the bulk of this.

One point of contention I have with the book is something that really isn't the fault of the writers, but it's that, in some cases, the pieces didn't go into as many details or nuances of the albums as I would have liked. I love Converge's *Jane Doe* and would have loved to read a song-by-song explanation of the album. Knowing that these were originally meant for a magazine, I understand that there's only so much one has space for; and I suppose the deeper analysis is why the 33 1/3 book series exists.

Other times, the questions go in one direction, where you might have wished they would have gone in another, but, generally speaking, you will learn a lot about some of your favorite metal albums.

Despite those few complaints, *Precious Metal* is a fine piece of work. It's unlikely someone is going to be a fan of all twenty-five albums

discussed in the book, but it's still worth flipping through to read the ones you are interested in. Besides, you'll finally be able to find out how Cannibal Corpse got the hook up to be in *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*. (Spoiler: Jim Carrey was a big fan of the band. For real.) —Kurt Morris (DaCapo, dacapopress.com)

## Scene Through My Lens: SoCal DIY: 2005-2007

By Donofthead, 160 pgs.

Donofthead has been with *Razorcake* from day one and he put in some time with *Flipside* with me. After *Razorcake* started, in addition to doing more than his fair share of record reviews, Don started doing live reviews for the website. A little while after, he asked me, "Do you mind if I just take pictures and post them up with links?" I thought it through. Part of what keeps *Razorcake* unique is that we only publish exclusive material and in this world where it's almost too easy to dump a thousand photos into the sky (known to others more technical as the interweb), I asked Don if he could make his postings unique. Instead of complaining, Don taught himself Photoshop, collected the shots of each band, picked the best three or four frames, made a background, used the band's logo, and, to this day, Don posts up live DIY punk shots on razorcake.org with amazing frequency.

Through putting together zines for the past fourteen years, I've come in contact with hundreds of photographers. Publishing books of contemporary music—not to mention DIY punk—is a difficult, rare, and risky venture. Publishers are hesitant because, by their nature, photo books need good paper and good paper's expensive. Photographers themselves—well, they want to be photographers and not publishers. One of the worst feelings in the world is printing a thousand books, selling less than a hundred, and staring at those fucking boxes every day for years as a tangible reminder of your failure.

Again, Don took it upon himself to learn a tedious nuts and bolts process—all the digital prepress to make his own book. Instead of complaining, Don went through multiple self-publishing companies—and complete format redesigns—before he found a match.

The end result is *Scene through My Lens*. The format's easy to visualize. Seventy-five all-ages friendly southern California DIY punk and hardcore bands. Each gets their own cross-page spread. The bands are ordered alphabetically. There are no beer banners in the background; in fact, most of the backgrounds are cinder block walls. It's all in black and white. It comes across as fair and democratic. Don takes great pains to get shots of each member of the band in every spread. Don's photos also show how big, diverse, and divergent punk is in the area he lives in. And if that's not a testament to one of the essential powers of photography, I'm not sure what is (even if Don claims he's "not a photographer, but I like to take pictures.")

My only suggestion for Don's next book—which is already in the works—is to lighten the backgrounds so they don't compete so much with the photos in the foreground. Other than that, let the DIY dictum of "learning through doing" keep etching its course because Don's accomplished what few punk photographers have: made his own book by himself instead of complaining about it or endlessly formulating a litany of excuses. —Todd (Order directly through unibook.com in the arts and culture section.)

To read more independent book reviews, go to [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org)



## Five Iron Frenzy: The Rise and Fall of: DVD

Five Iron Frenzy (FIF) were Christian ska punk that existed from the mid-'90s to the early '00s. That's pretty much it. Okay, they're "wacky." They like wearing costumes. They had video cameras from beginning to end, so if you've ever hankered for way-too-close, way-too-long footage of where they slept in a rest stop on the way to Cornerstone (one of many Christian festivals) and to eventually see the pores in the faces of every band member, there's plenty of that to contemplate in the documentary's way-too-long three-hour running time. By staring at his gob so long, I came to the conclusion that the lead singer, Reese, who directed this film, looked like a mix between Vanilla Ice and a blonde jockey character in *Saved by the Bell*. I was also happy the saxophonist could afford braces near the end.

"The Rise" happens when core members start off in Christian heavy metal band called Exhumator, but that wasn't working out so great and they admitted they kinda sucked, so they started a side project playing pop punk with horns and slowly morphed into looking like the members of Lagwagon when they weren't performing. With FIF, the interview process for prospective band members had two steps: "Can you play rooty toot honky ska music?" and the second was along the lines of "Do you take Jesus Christ as your personal savior?"

In “The Rise,” what’s interesting is that with all the miles of film shot, there’s no “Here’s how I came to perpetually high five J.C. when I was growing up” stories; what gave them faith in the beginning. I mean, it’s a documentary about the people in a band who made a body of music. That’s a simple step if it’s a core tenet of what the band’s about: ministering about the Lord while playing palatable, inoffensive music to impressionable teenagers. And I’m not trying to be a dick. Not just yet. The rare occasion when someone actually swears in the film, it’s bleeped or muted out. There’s also a bit of unintentional comedy that during one of their pre-show warm-up band prayers, they miss the announcement of no stage diving. They’re shut down four songs in when the singer leaps off the stage and inadvertently ends the band’s set. D’oh!

Although skacore of FIF’s ilk was like a plague of locusts heaven-sent in the late ‘90s, I was incredulous when FIF claimed they had sold 400,000 albums during their time as a band. But then it starts coming out in the film that there’s this worldwide “Christian marketplace” with its own well-heeled, huge-ass venues (churches, festivals), bookstores, and distribution system. Members go on to explain that they continue doing Christian shows “for the money.” That helps explain how they afforded the converted, tricked out school bus they end up driving around in and how the band still sold records for a longer period than many of their non-Christian skacore brethren. The Christian tithe infrastructure in America—much like conservative politics—is so well financed and ubiquitous while claiming to be marginalized. Here’s a glimpse at that. It’s like a J.C. trust fund for bands.

But FIF are troubled. They seek validity in the pagan, secular world of music. The drummer likes wearing an Avail shirt. The saxophonist mentions Fugazi. They seek more of a crossover and give the Warped Tour a shot for (their words) “street cred.” Financially, it’s a wash. During a yearly band retreat with their minister, everyone agrees to quit the band. That’s it. That’s “The Fall.” One dude now works at Best Buy.

I do believe in miracles, and this DVD has one. The music’s completely forgettable and quickly goes down the memory hole along with Save Ferris, Reel Big Fish, and MXPX. You’d think that Jesus would inspire better hooks. Stryper, Creed, now this? That’s all he’s got? —Todd (Asian Man)

### ***My Life Is Great: The Stevie Stiletto Story: DVD/CD***

The title is a bit of a misnomer. The DVD actually focuses more on the trials and tribulations of the band’s vocalist, Ray McKelvey than the actual band itself. Having stated that, perhaps a bit of background on Ray and the band are in order. Stevie Stiletto (And The Switchblades) were a “punk” band from Jacksonville, Florida that were active in some manner from the early 1980s to the 2000s. In hindsight, calling them a “punk” band musically may have been a stretch, but their DIY approach to their music, shows, and just about everything else was most definitely “punk.”

The DVD begins with interviews with Ray, his family, and childhood friends and quickly moves along to his musical endeavors. Nothing is very eventful until he and some acquaintances formed Stevie Stiletto And The Switchblades and began playing shows locally and regionally throughout the north Florida area and released several cassette-only EPs. As the band (and DVD) trudge along, they eventually release some vinyl, tour, replace members, and keep touring.

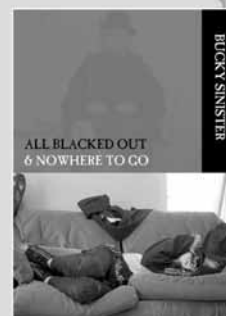
Then, the DVD returns to Ray’s story. Apparently, in the early days of his life (and the band), Ray was no stranger to drugs and alcohol. As the band toured and attempted to eke out a living as musicians, Ray’s intake increased and his behavior became more erratic. Mid-tour, he quits the band and heads back home to Jacksonville where, unfortunately, his taste for alcohol doesn’t diminish. He then forms a series of bands that ultimately became Stevie Stiletto (minus the Switchblades.) At this point, it’s revealed that Ray’s drinking had caused severe liver damage and he was given a terminal prognosis that he continues to defy to this day.

The DVD itself is a fair tribute to the man and the band, although it does tend to drag on; clocking in at about two hours. This could have been avoided with some tighter editing and greater diversity in the interviewees. The same people are interviewed repeatedly and it would have been nice to have some different perspectives offered. Likewise, the interviewees sometimes mention people and places that would not mean anything to you unless you knew Jacksonville. While I don’t think this DVD has much appeal outside of fans of the band, it’s a nice package that does give some perspective on a much-overlooked band and the then almost non-existent Jacksonville scene. As a bonus, you also get a CD retrospective of some of the band’s tunes that were in the documentary. Nicely done. —Garrett Barnwell (Geneva 13 Press, PO Box 13, Geneva, NY 14456)

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